A TREASURY OF THE

BLUES

COMPLETE WORDS AND MUSIC OF 67 GREAT SONGS
FROM MEMPHIS BLUES TO THE PRESENT DAY

EDITED BY **W. C. HANDY**

with an historical
and critical text by **ABBE NILES**

with pictures by **MIGUEL COVARRUBIAS**

FORTY YEARS AGO, W. C. Handy wrote a political campaign tune—and started a musical revolution.

That tune became the unforgettable *Memphis Blues* (known also as *Mister Crump*). It was the first of the steady stream of blues songs that today makes up one of the most exciting, delightful, and loved parts of American popular music. Now the words and music of *Memphis* and 66 other great tunes in the blues idiom have been collected by Handy to form A TREASURY OF THE BLUES.

Filled with the spirit of Southern Negro folk-song, the blues were a startling new musical experience for the country as a whole. Once American popular music was exposed to this enriching influence, it was never again the same. A TREASURY OF THE BLUES offers the high-spots of this fascinating "revolution," from 1912 blues to recent boogie-woogie, all arranged to be easily played on your piano. It contains:

A selection, arranged by Handy, of the traditional folk melodies that led up to the modern blues.

The great song hits with which Handy introduced the blues: *St. Louis Blues, Beale Street Blues, Joe Turner Blues,* and many others.

Songs by other Negro and white composers who adopted the blues and created tunes that have lived to become our modern folk-music, including Spencer Williams, Clarence Williams, George Gershwin, Hoagy Carmichael.

Excerpts from blues-derived larger

(Continued on back flap)

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From *Memphis Blues* to the Present Day

Edited by **W. C. HANDY**

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PUBLISHED BY CHARLES BONI

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ROCKEFELLER CENTER, 1230 SIXTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 20, N. Y.

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PRINTED BY REEHL LITHO CO.
BOUND BY H. WOLFF BOOK MFG. CO., INC.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE AUTHORS and the publishers gratefully acknowledge the kindness of the following music publishing firms (in addition to Handy Brothers Music Co., Inc.), whose permissions, for inclusion herein of musical numbers from their valuable lists, have made possible the representative character of this anthology. These publishers are separately identifiable from the individual copyright notices which appear with their selections in the book.

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Special courtesies by way of information, suggestions, and other assistance have been extended by a great number of people, including: Russell Bennett, Louis Bernstein, Eubie Blake, Billy Butler, Capt. Pierre de Caillaux, S. Brunson Campbell, Hoagy Carmichael, Carolyn Conlan, Decca Records, Inc., Duke Ellington, Forster Music Publishers (controlling *Chinese Blues* for Canada), John V. L. Hogan, Interstate Broadcasting Co., James P. Johnson, Orrin Keepnews, W. T. ("Ed") Kirkeby, Edward Laska, Peter Maurice Music Corp., Ltd. (controlling certain foreign rights to *Royal Garden Blues*), Edwin H. Morris & Co., Inc., Music Publishers Holding Corp., Abe Olman, Robbins Music Corp., J. Russell Robinson, Willard Robison, Will Rossiter, Elliott Shapiro, Noble Sissle, Clarence Williams, and Spencer Williams.

FOREWORD

THE SONGS in this volume, as in its original edition, which appeared in 1926 as *Blues: An Anthology*, have been selected by W. C. Handy, and many of his own compositions are included among them. This is only fitting, for it was Handy who first appreciated the universal appeal of the Negro blues, and who introduced into American "popular music" the qualities of these folk-songs. A Negro musician, bandmaster, and composer—and later a music publisher—of rare creative and analytical powers, Handy wrote the first and several of the most famous of the published blues, thereby starting a revolution, a fundamental change in the character of the popular music of this land, comparable only to that brought about by the introduction of ragtime.

The blues, after that introduction, became embedded in our music so rapidly that, for a number of years, their folk source and their history tended to be overlooked.

My curiosity on this subject led me, a stranger, to Mr. Handy's door twenty-four years ago. Handy's talk exhibits such qualities of humor, of comprehension, and of nobility, that to hear it is to long to repeat it. When our first series of interviews was over I knew that we had a book on our hands. Fortunately, circumstances have enabled me to remain in close touch with Handy in the years that have followed. He is still the fountainhead of information on the blues. For that matter, although I am not of his race and do not mean to be dogmatic on such a subject, I know of no one else who combines his detached appreciation and his native understanding of Negro ways, lore and sayings.

I. *THE FOLK-BLUES AS VERSE*

The blues sprang up, probably in the early 1900s, among illiterate and despised Southern Negroes: barroom pianists, street-corner guitar players, wandering laborers, the watchers of incoming trains and steamboats, prostitutes and outcasts. While a spiritual lent itself to choral treatment, a blues was a one-man affair. Typically it originated as an expression of the singer's feeling, complete in a single verse. It was sung, because singing, to these people, was as natural a means of expression as speaking. Starting, perhaps, as a mere one-line interjection, a singer's idea might never be developed any further, or it might turn into one of many forms of folk-song. Perhaps because of its simplicity and suitability for improvisation, one particular form became especially popular: the line would be sung, repeated, and repeated once again, as in this crude specimen:

Gwine take morphine an' die,
Gwine take morphine an' die,
Gwine take morphine an' die.

The tune might be new, but it did not need to be. The old three-line, twelve-bar song, *Joe Turner* (more fully discussed on p. 244), was known and sung all over the South, sometimes under various other names and with differing words. A singer might fit his impromptu lines to such a tune; the melody itself might help in framing the words, or there might already be associated with the tune other verses—plaintive, smart, or obscene—which the singer might tack on after the lines he had invented. If his verse had merit, his listeners might adopt it, and it would be added to the common storehouse of blues lyrics. Or, if his tune had a melodic or rhythmic twist of its own, it might be accepted eventually as a standard vehicle for old and new blues expressions. However, few individual blues tunes in their entirety seem to have had wide acceptance in the early days.

The thought was not necessarily expressed in a single line, twice repeated. A slight modification in the second line, by way of emphasis, came to be customary; this was a matter of individual choice, and is shown in some

of the examples below. The third line might introduce something new; if the first two lines expressed grief or wistful reflection, line three could supply a reason for the grief, or a collateral conclusion. The third line thus became the most important, releasing the tension built up by the earlier repetition:

Gwine lay my head right on de railroad track,
Gwine lay my head right on de railroad track,
'Cause my baby, she won't take me back.

Gwine lay my head right on de railroad track,
Gwine lay my head right on de railroad track,
If de train come 'long, I'm gwine to snatch it back.

Don't want no man puttin' sugar in my tea,
Don't want no man puttin' sugar in my tea,
'Cause I'm evil, 'fraid he might poison me.

If I had wings, like Nora's [Noah's] faithful dove,—
Had *strong* wings, like Nora's faithful dove,
I would fly away, to de man I love.

The blues are often, but not always, rueful. They may offer some shrewd general comment, in epigrammatic form:

Ketch two women runnin' togedder long,
Ketch two women runnin' togedder long,
You can bet yo' life dere's somethin' gwine wrong.

If yo' house ketch fire, an' dey ain't no water roun',
If yo' house ketch fire, an' dey ain't no water roun',
Throw yo' trunk out de window, an' let de shack buhn down.

Or the spirit may be ridicule. In this stanza "monkey-man" means a West Indian:

Dey's two kind of people in dis worl', dat I can't stan',
Dey's two kind of people in dis worl', dat I can't stan',
An' dat's a two-faced woman, an' a monkey-man.

Modern published blues often run to the theme of love. Many early folk-blues were love songs, too. Generally, of course, they were concerned with separated or unhappy lovers:

When you see me comin', h'ist yo' window high,
When you see me comin', h'ist yo' window high,
When you see me goin', hang yo' head an' cry.

Oh, de Mississippi River is so deep an' wide,
Oh, de Mississippi River is so deep an' wide,
An' my gal lives on de odder side.

Oh, de *Kate*'s up de river, *Stack* is in de ben',
Oh, de *Kate*'s up de river, *Stack* is in de ben',
And I ain't seen my baby since I don' know when.

"Hang yo' head an' cry" is a favorite phrase, found in many folk-songs. The Mississippi River steamboats *Kate Adams* and *Stackolee*, of the Lee Line, are referred to in the third stanza, thus dating its first line back more than fifty years.

Other blues tell of the longing to be elsewhere, as in this crude example sung all along the Ohio River to the tune of *Joe Turner:*

Gwine down de river befo' long,
Gwine down de river befo' long,
Gwine down de river befo' long,

and in a verse sung in Texas:

Michigan water tastes like sherry wine,
Michigan water tastes like sherry wine,
I'm gwine back to Michigan, to de one I lef' behin'.

The wide scope of the blues verse is indicated in the following assortment of traditional stanzas, which manage to express virtually every emotion except solid satisfaction with life. (Among the racial meanings in these lyrics, "boll-weevil" is a symbol for all petty gougers and "cutters"; in Mississippi it was the term for railroad conductors. "Black cat's bone" is an equivalent of a rabbit's foot, and a valuable love charm. A "tidy" is a woman's "steady," who dresses up when he calls. "Jack" is of course a jackass. "Rider"—short for "easy rider"—is a procurer who lives in; he is ex-

pected to be faithful to his client, as Frankie expected of Johnny.)

Boll-weevil, where you been so long?
Boll-weevil, where you been so long?
You stole my cotton, now you wants my co'n.

Boll-weevil, don't you sing de blues no mo',
Boll-weevil, don't you sing de blues no mo',
Boll-weevil's everywhere you go.

B'lieve to my soul, dat man's got a black cat's bone.
(*I said black cat; I mean bone.*)
B'lieve to my soul, dat man's got a black cat's bone.
(*I said black cat; I mean bone.*)
Every time I leave him, I got to hurry back home.

Let me be yo' rag-doll till yo' tidy come,
If he can beat me raggin', he's got to rag it some,—my honey
How long has I got to wait,
Oh, can I git you now, or must I hesitate?

Ashes to ashes, an' a-dus' to dus',
Ef de whiskey don't git you, den de cocaine mus',—my honey, etc.

Did you ever see yo' honey, when her good man's not aroun'?
Did you ever see yo' honey, when her good man's not aroun'?
She gets up in de mo'nin', tuhns de fedder-bed upside-down.[1]

If you want to keep yo' baby, better git yo'self a lock an' key,
If you want to keep yo' baby, better git yo'self a lock an' key,
'Cause too many men a-been stealin' my baby from me.[1]

My moder's dead, my fader's 'crost de sea,
My moder's dead, my fader's 'crost de sea,
Ain't got nobody to feel an' care for me.

Gwine to de river, take a rockin' chair,
Gwine to de river, take a rockin' chair,
If de blues o'ertake me, gwine rock 'way from dere.

[1] Supplied by Langston Hughes.

Gwine to de river, take a rope an' a rock,
Gwine to de river, take a rope an' a rock,
Gwine to tie rope roun' my neck, an' jump right over de dock.[2]

Got full o' my moonshine, walked de streets all night,
Got full o' my moonshine, walked de streets all night,
Squabblin' wid my eight-rock 'cause she wasn't white.

If I could holler like a mountin' jack,
If I could holler like a mountin' jack,
I'd go up on de hillside, an' call my rider back.

In these, as in almost all blues, the essential element is the singer's own personality. Whatever is said is in some way brought back to *him;* he deals in his own troubles, desires, resentments, his opinions of life and people. There seems even to be room left for his pleasures. Happy blues are rare, but some have an invincible optimism:

What you gwine to do when dey buhn de bar'l-house down?
What you gwine to do when dey buhn de bar'l-house down?
Gwine move out de piano, an' bar'l-house on de groun'.

Melancholy, however, is most frequently the theme; there is no doubt that the name "blues" was bestowed on the tunes because of the mood of the verses. The essence of the blues is in such traditional lines as "Got de blues, but too damn mean to cry."

The typical words are made striking by a philosophy between the lines, which chooses laughter, instead of tears, as the reaction to trouble. It is an attractively unexpected mood: exuberant and fantastic, spontaneous and native, unforced. Just to show how plain unlucky a woman is, she says:

Went to de gypsy, to have my fortune tol',
Went to de gypsy, to have my fortune tol',—
Gypsy tol' me, doggone you, girlie, doggone yo' bad-luck soul.

[2] Supplied by Walter F. White.

And for another example of the spirit:

De brook run into de river, river run into de sea,
De brook run into de river, river run into de sea,—
An' if I don't run into my daddy, paw's gwine have to bury me.

Still another was overheard by Handy, the impromptu remark of a Memphis mule-driver:

G'wan, mule!
Don't you want to wuhk?
Hadn't ought t'been a mule.
Ought t'been a woman.
Then I'd be workin' fo' you.
G'wan, mule!

On the woman's side, Handy recalls this:

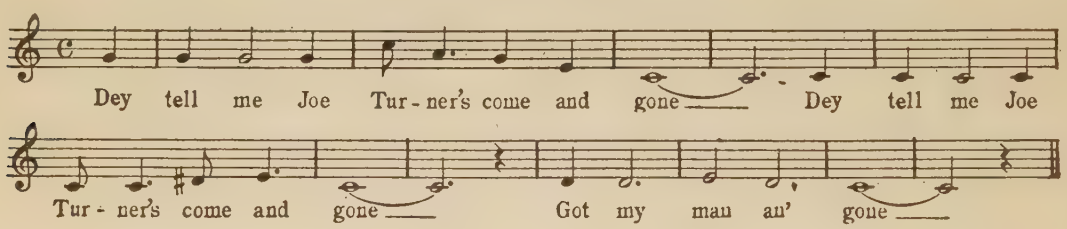
The man I'll marry ain't born yet—an' his mammy's dead.

The white commercial song writers were quicker to notice and imitate the spirit of the blues than their musical form. But this basic distinction should be observed: in the Negro blues it is the gaiety that is feigned, while in the white, it is the grief.

II. *THE FOLK-BLUES AS MUSIC*

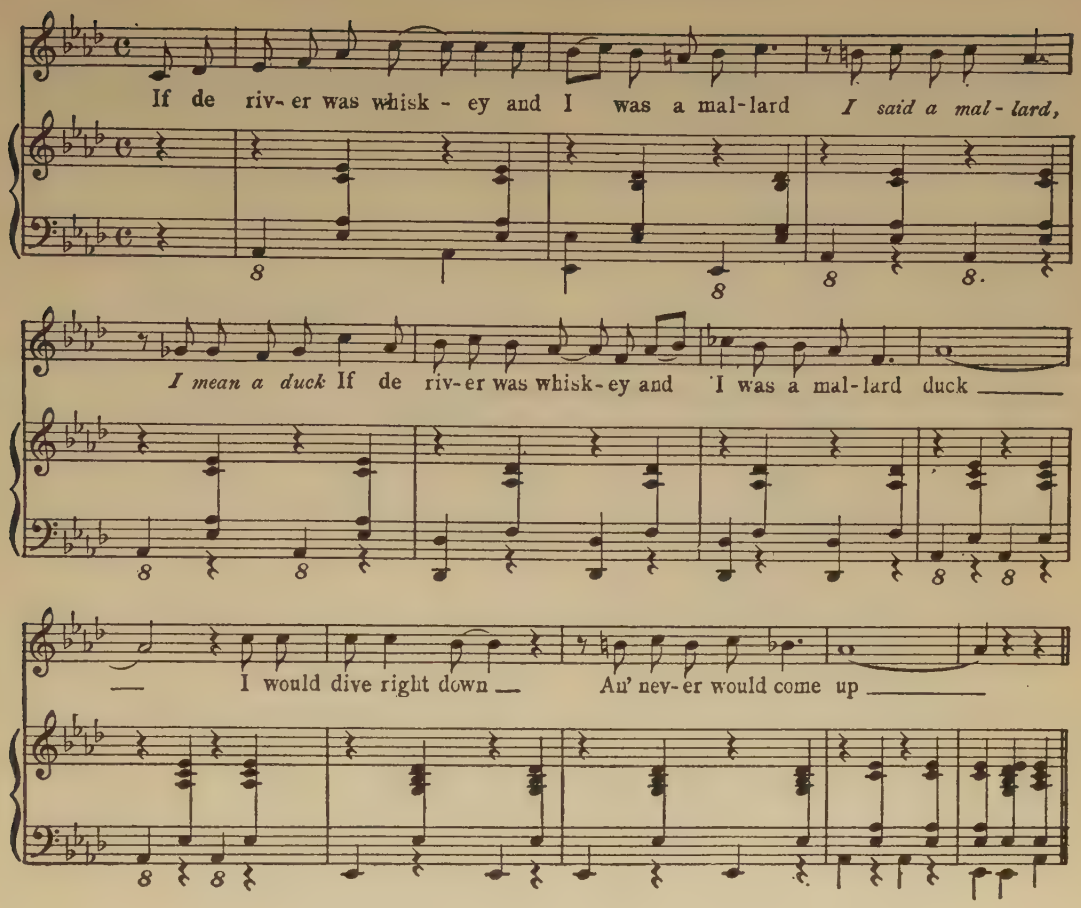
The structural peculiarities of the blues tune are probably more the cause than the result of the unusual, three-line stanza, but both are equally well suited to improvisation, and each soon adapted itself to the architecture of the other. Just as the words were in three lines, instead of the two or four more familiar in simple lyrics, so the music fell into a twelve-bar pattern, rather than the usual eight or sixteen bars.

As the examples I have used have indicated, each blues line usually expressed a complete thought, and could be considered a complete sentence. Similarly, the music would return, on the last syllable of each line, to the keynote, or to the third or fifth, as if placing a period at the end of a sentence. Thus the entire strain is made up of three short hops, separated by distinct intervals, instead of being one sustained flight. From this there stem rather bizarre and contrasting effects of internal finality and final incompleteness: where one expects the melody to stop, it resumes; and just as one expects a fourth four-bar phrase, the music stops. Take the classic, *Joe Turner*, shown below:



Many verses in the folklore are in the blues spirit, yet are excluded from the blues form. The division seems arbitrary, and it is of course true that the sense of any of the examples used here could be expressed in a couplet. But it is the singers' own distinction. In this usage, it was only the verses that could be fitted to the three-cornered tunes like *Joe Turner* that came to be called "blues," and, conversely, they would say of a new melody to which they could not sing one of their three-line verses: "That ain't no blues!" Extend a name to cover everything, and it soon means nothing.

Certain examples show a deviation: the first eight bars present a single period, with thesis and antithesis; the last four supply a coda based on the preceding four. When such a construction is found in a folk-blues, it would suggest that the original verse sung to it expressed a single thought, without repetition. But in the beautiful variant on the early *Dallas Blues* shown on the facing page (see p. 64, for published version of this early blues; see also note on pp. 241-242), all that has been done is to bridge over the interval between the first and second phrases:


If de riv-er was whisk - ey and I was a mal-lard *I said a mal-lard,*
I mean a duck If de riv-er was whisk-ey and I was a mal-lard duck
I would dive right down An' nev-er would come up

[3]

Oh, de Mississippi River is so deep an'—*so wide an' deep, an', so deep an' wide, an'*—
De Mississippi River am so deep an' wide
An' de lights buhn low, on de udder side.

Did you ever wake up in de middle of de night with de blues *all round you, de blues all round you, did you*
Ever wake up with de blues all round yo' bed?
An' no one near, to soothe yo' achin' head?

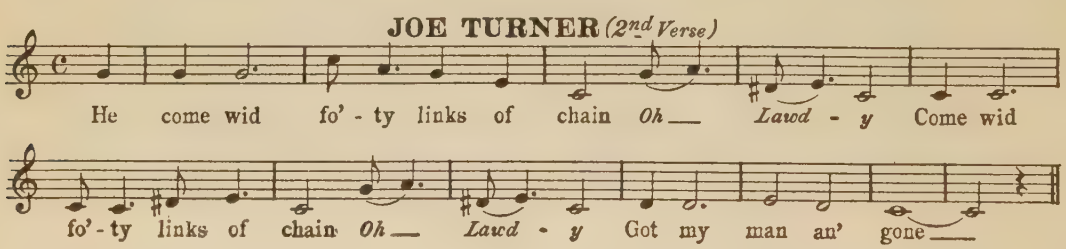
Oh, de graveyard is a nasty ol' place, dey spade you under, *spade you under, dey*
Shovel you under, an' dey throw dirt in yo' face;
Ooh, de graveyard is a nasty ol' place.

The italicized words in this song are, of course, merely patter accompanying a musical "break." The only irregularity is in the short rest between "mallard" and "I said," and if you insert in place of this rest the word "duck," both tune and verse conform to type. In the well-known *Frankie and Johnny* (a ballad, rather than a blues, but ha ing a twelve-bar tune), the second phrase is bridged to both the first and the third.

[3] *Dallas Blues:* Copyright 1912, Mayfair Music Corp.; copyright renewed. Used by permission. Above words are traditional and not used in published version. They and the variant music given here were transcribed from memory for the 1926 edition of this book, as I heard it sung by a white American, in an English public house, in 1920.

Since the first edition I have determined that *Dallas Blues* was the second piece known to have been published under the name "blues." (There had been nineteenth-century tunes with such titles as *The Richmond Blues,* but these were actually marches, named for local military organizations, and "blue" was merely the color of a uniform—*cf.,* in New York, the "Knickerbocker Greys.") The first so-called "blues" was *Baby Seals Blues* (see pp. 180, 250), which appeared in St. Louis, on August 3, 1912; *Dallas* was published in Oklahoma City, on September 6, 1912. The third was Handy's *Memphis Blues,* in Memphis, on September 28, 1912, but this had already been played for three years before its publication (see p. 18 and following).

In *Joe Turner* each line of the words occupies considerably less than the allotted four bars, leaving a long wait before the next phrase. This is quite typical, and it is also important to the history of jazz. For one thing, it provides the improviser with a breathing space in which to shape his next idea. And if he is not concentrating on the creation of a new line, he can use this space for whatever fantastic vocal or instrumental wanderings he will, returning usually—though not necessarily—to the keynote, third or fifth before the next phrase. Thus, in folk-blues the last syllable of each vocal line coincides not only with the keynote or another element of the major triad but also with the first beat of the third bar of the musical phrase that accompanies it. Accordingly, there then follow either seven quick beats or three slow ones (depending on the time signature), before the basic melody is resumed. The irregular rest in the *Dallas* variant falls on the crucial beat; the surplus notes which follow it, and which fill in the interval, are what is known as "the break" or "the jazz." Actually this particular break is well concealed and woven into the main framework, as appears when we compare a verse of the simpler example of *Joe Turner* with its break added:



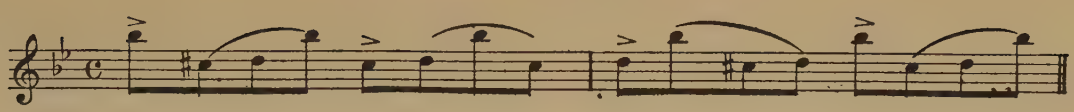
In the folk-blues, these breaks had no such name, and were generally as simple as this last specimen, but there might also be esoteric improvisations on the banjo or piano. It is unfortunate that no actual transcriptions of these early instrumental breaks are in existence. Like the verses, they were, of course, unwritten and spontaneous; but, unlike them, they could not be passed on by word of mouth, and were not apt to be imitated. More recent improvised jazz of this sort has been preserved on recordings. At least one such break has been kept alive by much imitation—the shifting-rhythm device in the latter part of *Memphis Blues*, which was introduced by Paul Wyer, violinist in Handy's Memphis Band, three years before the song was published, and which is shown at the top of the facing page.

Harmony and Tunes

The early, unwritten blues tunes were extremely simple, and so constructed that a singer who wished to accompany himself need know only three chords—the common chords of the keynote and subdominant, and the chord of the dominant seventh. I have arranged the *Dallas Blues* variant in this way (p. 13). This peculiarity, of course, is by no means confined to the blues. *Yankee Doodle*, *Swanee River*, *Holy Night*, and no doubt thousands of others may be sung to the same three chords.

A classical blues melody consists of three brief phrases, made up of the syncopated juggling of a very few notes.[4] If you disregard the minor third in *Joe Turner*, you find that it is limited in this way. The frequent return to the keynote gave an almost hypnotic effect that is an important blues quality; the only other note equally stressed was the third. And the third has given the blues an equally basic characteristic: the untrained Negro voice had a tendency to "worry" this note when dwelling upon it, slurring or wavering between flat and natural. The slur was to be expected even when the accompaniment was the banjo—a cheerful in-

[4] These notes might be those of the pentatonic scale, which omits the fourth and seventh, running "do, re, mi, sol, la." The characteristic blues accompaniment, with its subdominant modulations, may seem inappropriate to pentatonic melodies, but this may be explained by Ballanta-Taylor's theory that the African, although he frequently sings in this scale, does so without feeling it *as* a scale.



strument. With a guitar, whose strings are normally arranged to invite use of minor chords, it would be even more pronounced, and might be duplicated on the instrument. Any Memphis Negro boy who acquired a harmonica would operate on it with a knife till it would produce the slur at will. Failing of that, he would throw it away, for this musical trick (the basis for the modern "blue note") is a native African inheritance, and ingrained.

This peculiarity may be explained by a characteristic Negro fondness for the flatted seventh—and by an affinity for the key of the subdominant, of which in the tonic scale third *is* the seventh. To test this, experiment on the blues in this collection, striking with each prominent minor third its seventh below (and note also the striking examples in the last strain of *Beale Street Blues*, on p. 105). To a listener not familiar with the blues, and thinking in terms of a single scale, the momentary change of key might not be apparent; actually, it might be difficult to classify the entire melody, if sung unaccompanied, as either major or minor.

The Name and the Form

The blues are a comparatively recent form, but they were woven of the same stuff as the long list of Negro folk-songs out of which, in part, they developed: the work songs, love songs, devil songs, the over-and-overs, slow-drags, pats, stomps, and, decidedly, the spirituals. They were at first called by several of these names, but by 1910 (there is no substantial evidence of an earlier date) they had achieved enough of a separate status to be known specifically as "the blues" among many Southern Negroes. Most of them were still merely independent verses, with no titles save their first lines to distinguish one from another. Such titles as *Weary Blues* and *Worried Blues* were probably merely generic terms; one can imagine the white man asking, "What's that terrible thing you're singing?" and the answer: "Oh, dat's jus' de weary blues." For by that time the blues had become established as a rigid, definite form, a vehicle for common-property verses and, as I have noted, of a character that encouraged further improvisation.

I have been referring frequently to *Joe Turner*, and it is quite likely that this folk-song was the grandfather of all blues. All early blues may have been merely conscientious renditions of *Joe Turner*, to the best of the singers' memories; therefore any and all of them would simply be "the blues." The framework and harmonic scheme of *Joe Turner* were familiar everywhere; they were probably "natural" and inherent. Thus they might be adopted, quite unconsciously, for impromptu, crude improvisation, and having involved so little creative effort, would easily be forgotten—small pain, short memory. But the *form* was of more durable stuff; it would remain as a base on which to hang the next flimsy tune. Anyone who understands the form can compose a blues tune; try it on your piano. It may not be good, but it will be blues. And here lies the explanation of a seemingly curious fact: the true, "three-cornered" blues were being sung all over the South before one was ever published, yet it is their words, not their tunes, that survive. New spirituals, with highly developed melodies, are constantly being uncovered; why not pre-Handy blues tunes? The answer is that the blues were essentially a mold—filled, emptied, and replenished, so easy to fill that little trouble was taken filling it.

It remained for one musician to take it up, to attempt to put into it something of lasting value. But for that man, W. C. Handy, the blues might not so soon have penetrated the national consciousness, nor ever have become the integral part of our music that they now are.

III. *WILLIAM CHRISTOPHER HANDY*

Handy was born in Florence, Alabama, nine miles from the Muscle Shoals Canal, on November 16, 1873, son and grandson of Methodist ministers. His grandfather built the first Negro church in the little town, and the west side of Florence is known as Handy's Hill today. None of the Handys had been musical, the calling itself was considered disreputable, and Handy recalls his father's declaring that he would sooner follow his son's hearse than see him a professional musician. But young Handy had, perhaps from his mother's family, the Brewers, a musical bent. From his earliest days, on visits to his grandfather's farm near Lock 7 (the present site of the Wilson Dam), he would escape down to the locks to hear the laborers sing; and he never missed an opportunity to learn more about music. There should be no mistake as to this: he obtained a sound, thorough, and early musical grounding. He has been severely criticized for this by some devotees of musical illiteracy, and he might as well have the credit, too.

There was a great variety of local sources for him to draw upon. The Negro public school boasted a teacher from Fisk University, Y. A. Wallace, who eternally drilled his classes in singing by the tonic sol-fa system until they could perform, unaccompanied, choruses from Wagner, Verdi, and Bizet. Handy studied under Wallace for eleven years. Also, in those post-Civil War days, itinerant white music teachers, some of them from England, found the Southern Negroes to be a fertile and lucrative field for musical instruction. A Professor Rice had organized the Florence Brass Band, and he was succeeded by Professor Long, formerly bandmaster with Howes' New London Circus. The band rehearsed in a large barbershop, in which was set up a blackboard showing the proper fingering for the various instruments. After school young Handy would peep through the windows and learn what he could. Later, without his parents' knowledge, he obtained an ancient, battered $2.50 rotary-valve cornet, which he fingered outside the shop while the bandsmen played within. Before too long Handy was a member of the local band.

And Florence, like every Southern town, had its quartet. When Handy became a tenor, he joined them in singing the popular songs of the day, as performed by the minstrel shows, circuses, and "concert companies." Since the quartet, which later grew into a glee club, could all read music, they sang the famous arrangements of Buck and Shattuck, sometimes even sending to London for their quartet arrangements. Handy recalls that they often serenaded their sweethearts with love songs; the young white bloods overheard, and took to hiring them to serenade the white girls in Florence and neighboring towns.

There was still no sympathy at home for any thought of a musical career. So after two years as a teacher in the public schools, Handy decided that $19.75 a month was not enough, and went to Birmingham to work in the Harrison Howard Pipe Works for $1.85 a day. He was only nineteen, but he was a musician, and capable then—as he has been ever since—of filing away in his memory any song, even any unintentionally musical cry, that reached his ears. It was there, for instance, that he first heard the old folk-tune which he wrote down thirty years later, with due acknowledgment, as the second part of *Harlem Blues*. It was originally a song about Allius Brown, High Sheriff of Jefferson County (Birmingham):

Here comes Allius Brown, ridin' after me,
Ridin' after me, boys, ridin' after me,—
Here comes Allius Brown, ridin' after me;
I'm gwine back to Birmingham.

And he later heard it sung all over the South to other words:

I've laid aroun' an' fooled aroun', till summer's
almost gone,
Summer's almost gone, babe, summer's almost
gone.
I've laid aroun', an' fooled aroun', till summer's
almost gone,—
I've laid 'roun' dis town too long.

The Birmingham interlude was short. Depression closed the shops in 1893 and Handy

returned permanently to music. He organized a quartet which started out for the Chicago World's Fair with a capital of just twenty cents, all Handy's, and which nevertheless, by singing in Southern church concerts, serenading in the towns, and entertaining train crews and passengers, finally reached its destination —only to find the Fair postponed. There followed a short period of mingled fascination and starvation in St. Louis, in memory of which he eventually named his most famous song. He was a band leader in Evansville, Indiana, and then in Henderson, Kentucky, where the magnificent German singing society so impressed him that he became janitor of the building for the extra choral education this afforded. The reputation which he was gradually building for himself brought him his next major assignment, as cornet soloist and later bandmaster and orchestra leader for the famous Mahara's Colored Minstrels. Save for a two-year intermission teaching music at the A. and M. College in Huntsville, Alabama, he followed the gaudy old-time minstrel life from 1896 to 1903. Mahara's show played principally in Northern cities, for Negroes were something of a novelty there, and customers would pay up to three dollars to see their performance, at a time when troupes in the South were playing for the traditional "ten, twenty, thirty" cents' admission fee.

He continued, as ever, to absorb the ways of Negro song, but this was in spite of his job, not because of it. Mahara's Minstrel Show, like any other of the period, paid no serious attention to the musical expressions of the race; if a spiritual were sung at all, it was a lively one, which could be burlesqued into a reel:

Get on boa'd, little chillun',
Get on boa'd, *big* chillun',
Get on boa'd, *all* de chillun'—
Daddy and Mammy, too!

At noon in the town square, and again outside the auditorium before the evening performance, Handy would lead the musicians through daily, hour-long "classical concerts." All minstrel bands were expected to play the *William Tell* and *Poet and Peasant* overtures, and some selections from *The Mikado* or *Bohemian Girl*, plus perhaps a medley of American airs like *Plantation Echoes*, interspersed with solos for the piccolo, trombone, or trumpet. In the theater the soloist would probably offer the latest tune from Broadway, from Paul Dresser or Charles K. Harris. Mahara's star performer, Billy Young, had a repertoire that ranged from a selection from Shakespeare to a Chauncey Olcott song—depending on his audience—but his specialties were the tear-jerking songs of Gussie L. Davis, such as *Fatal Wedding*, or *Picture 84*. Davis, who produced more than five hundred songs, was one of only two Negroes whose tunes were used in the early minstrel shows. The other was James Bland, for no program was complete without a minstrel chorus rendition of his *Golden Slippers*, probably followed by the Stephen Foster favorites and *Dixie*. Most of the other selections were "coon songs." These were dutifully undertaken by the musicians, who were obliging or subtle enough to put them over with gusto and get their laughs. But their private opinions of such burlesques were something else again.

Such were the colored minstrel shows of that day. Yet Mahara's contributed to Handy's musical education. One night in Oakland, California, in 1897, he made his entrance for the "classical cornet solo"—it was Hartmann's *Mia*—and found that his variations were being applauded from the boxes, but hissed by the gallery. Next evening he played the new song hit *Georgia Camp Meeting*, and he tapped his foot; this time he won undivided applause.

In 1903 he was teaching and leading the Knights of Pythias Band and Orchestra in Clarksdale, Mississippi: nine men in uniform, playing the latest Broadway hits. Here he experienced another such jolt as that of the "classical cornet solo," and also to be recognized later as a valuable lesson. The band was working at a white society dance in the near-by town of Cleveland. After several hours of the conventional dance music, there was a call to "play some of your own people's music." Handy's men tried a slow-drag, *Peaceful Henry*, which he had played with Mahara's, but that didn't seem to be enough. So to demonstrate what was wanted, someone brought in

three local Negroes with a guitar, mandolin, and bass viol, who began a rough, backyard over-and-over that brought them more, in tips, than the full evening's salary of the uniformed band.

It was still hard to grasp the fact that there was the germ of something of commercial value in this unplanned musical by-product, which Handy had been enjoying and storing away all his life. What a Mississippi town would accept —perhaps just as a whim—for part of an evening could not be considered fit material for regular use. When, a few weeks later, Handy heard some unknown, outside a country railroad station, playing a guitar with a knife blade and whining something about "Gwine where de Southern cross de Yaller Dawg" (the Yellow Dog is the Yazoo Delta railroad, which crosses the Southern line's tracks at Morehead, Mississippi), he was impelled, as always, to question the singer and jot down the tune as something of beauty. But his momentary first idea of doing something constructive with such material was deferred in favor of the more practical project of moving to Memphis.

In 1905 he was teaching the Memphis colored Pythian Band, and such individual pupils as he could get, to support his family. He was organizing a new band, *the* Handy Band, from among other strangers who had wandered into town and were wondering how to gain a place in the Memphis orchestral field, which was largely divided among several tight cliques. There was great demand for music in Memphis. Social life was gay; there were many dances; from corner saloons came the sound of guitars, of pianos, and of singing. During the day, bands might be heard throughout the suburbs, and on Beale Street and other important thoroughfares, playing to advertise a dance that would be held that evening—perhaps at Church's Park. Even the routine advertising campaigns amounted to little unless they sent out small bands to whip up public attention in the far quarters of the city.

The Memphis Blues

It was the Memphis idea of advertising, in combination with its politics, that led Handy directly toward his destiny. In 1909 the fight for the mayoralty was three-cornered. There were also three leading Negro bands: Eckford's, Bynum's, and Handy's. As a matter of course, these bands were engaged to call to the public attention the executive abilities of the several candidates. Through a ward leader named Jim Mulcahy, before whose saloon the Handy band had often played, Handy was engaged for candidate E. H. Crump. This was a large commission, involving the organization of sub-bands to cover all possible voting territory, and Handy was inspired to create a tune for the occasion. Automatically, he turned to the blues form, which had by this time embedded itself in his thought. What he wrote, however, was anything but a lament. When his band opened fire with the piece—named, of course, *Mister Crump*—at the corner of Main and Madison, it caused dancing in the streets and public whistling. With such a song, the popular choice was a foregone conclusion: Crump became mayor and Handy became a local celebrity. He was sought after for all celebrations, called on to write out manuscripts of his song for the belles between numbers at the dances (and tipped handsomely by their beaux), and he was proprietor of a whole chain of bands—sending out up to sixty-seven musicians to various quarters of Memphis and even to surrounding states in a single night.

As played that first night, *Mister Crump*'s first and third parts were without lyrics, but the second, of the more familiar sixteen-bar construction, was sung by Handy's guitarist to a little stanza in which Handy had summarized the sentiments already current in Memphis Negro circles (at seventy-five, he is now bold enough to admit being its author). Crump was running on a clean-up-the-town platform, but this verse ran as follows:

Mister Crump won't 'low no easy riders here,
Mister Crump won't 'low no easy riders here.
I don't care what Mister Crump don't 'low,
I'm gwine to bar'l-house anyhow,—
Mister Crump can go an' catch hisself some air!

The official platform may have helped in some Memphis homes, but it was to these valiant

words that Handy's candidate rode to triumph.

It is only fair to add that Mr. Crump, through the years, has shown ample ability to get ahead under his own steam. Certainly neither he nor Mr. Handy would claim that—if their divergent paths had not intersected for that one musical moment—the other would not have reached both his immediate object and his ultimate destination.

The first blues ever written down enriched others, but, for many years, not its composer. His first composition, a *Roosevelt Triumphal March*, had gone down to oblivion with the Chicago house that had bought it. His second, with words by his future partner, Harry H. Pace, and entitled *In the Cotton Fields of Dixie*, had been published in Cincinnati, but the writers had been done out of their royalties. *Mister Crump* was turned down by one New York firm after another, with the acute observation that the strains were four bars short. In Memphis, Handy was told that a Negro's work could not be accepted for publication anyway—probably most Southern whites of that day would have been surprised to learn that the vaudeville stars, Cole and Johnson, and song writers Gussie L. Davis and James Bland were colored, and that some of the biggest song hits in the show windows were by a Memphis Negro, J. Lubrie Hill, then playing in New York in his own production, *My Friend from Dixie*.

In the summer of 1912, however, L. Z. Phillips, white, volunteered to "help" Handy publish a thousand copies and to try them out on the music counter at Bry's Department Store, where Phillips worked. Handy accepted. Phillips (who, incidentally, has been credited with composing the *Marine Hymn*) was employed by Bry's music-department concessionnaire Theron C. Bennett, a Denver publisher.[5] Phillips took the manuscript, wordless and retitled as *The Memphis Blues, or, Mister Crump*, and ordered it printed in Ohio. Bennett himself turned up in Memphis in time to get his "Theron C. Bennett Co." named in the printer's proof as "Selling Agts," and on Saturday, September 28th, the white men let Handy see his thousand copies put on sale.

Next week, however, they let him know that the public considered the piece "too hard" and wouldn't buy it—most of the thousand copies, they pointed out, were still on the shelf. That seemed to end Handy's hopes for the song, and when Bennett offered to risk fifty dollars cash for the copyright itself, royalty-free, Handy took him up. For many years, however, they called it a hundred-dollar deal, because one hundred dollars sounded better and because they were counting in a batch of the unsold copies which were turned back to Handy, although he had paid for the printing in the first place. A few days later, the printer's records show, Bennett ordered another ten thousand copies with his own imprint.

In the '30s Bennett (by then inclined to romanticize his pioneering adventure in the blues) wrote an account which said that the first thousand copies of *Memphis Blues* had sold out in three days. This looked like press-agent's license at the time, but in 1939 a search of the Ohio printer's original records furnished undreamed-of proof of its possible accuracy. These records show that Phillips' printing order had been, not for one thousand copies, as arranged with Handy, but for *two* thousand, half to come by express and the rest by freight. Thus, Handy's obliging friends could indeed have sold a thousand, and still have had a thousand to prove that no one would buy.

Bennett took *The Memphis Blues* home to Denver, reissued it with success, and in 1913 brought it out (minus its first strain) as a song about the Handy Band. The lyrics of this version were credited to George A. Norton, who as Bennett's staff writer had done a similar job on another famous piece, Ernie Burnett's *My Melancholy Baby*. Bennett made a great deal of money from *Memphis*, spent it, and eventually lost his ownership. When this book first appeared, twenty-three years ago, Handy could not—save at a prohibitive price—even obtain permission from Bennett's current successor in title to include *The Memphis Blues*.

Handy, however, survived both Phillips and

[5] It should thus be noted that Bry's Store itself had no interest or responsibility in the transaction here described.

Bennett, survived the first twenty-eight-year term of the *Memphis* copyright, and thereupon, under the renewal provision of our copyright law, recaptured his piece. (I had the pleasure of observing his expression as he handed in the papers at the Copyright Office in Washington.) The original *Memphis Blues*, with some of the street-jingles that were sung to its tune, may be found at p. 60 of this volume. Even now, thirty-seven years later, a New York publishing corporation is suing Handy under a claim of rights acquired from a relative of Norton, but Handy feels that, at least, he has made progress since the affair at Bry's.

Handy did not sit back to mourn on losing his hit, but sensibly set about producing another one. The *St. Louis Blues* appeared in 1914. This he did not sell out, and it is a national anthem today. His other great blues followed down the years. He formed a publishing firm in Memphis with Harry H. Pace, whom he also survived, moved it to New York in 1919, and still runs it on Broadway as Handy Bros. Music Co., Inc., with his brother Charles and his children, W. C., Jr., Katharine, Lucille, and Wyer Owens Handy, as its central staff. He has carried it on through two onsets of blindness, the second of which threatens to be permanent. What he cannot read, he has read to him, and remembers generally longer than the reader. What he can no longer write, he dictates, and this includes the choral or orchestral arrangements of Negro spirituals remembered from his youth (some of them remembered by him alone) which have been his principal musical preoccupation for some years past. These, though he will never see them, are, nevertheless, W. C. Handy arrangements. He does not want anyone else ever to rearrange the standard piano-and-voice versions of his own songs.

At seventy-five years, he is a churchman, a thirty-third degree Mason, and the pride of the authors', composers', and publishers' association, ASCAP. (The affection with which he is regarded by the hard-boiled New York music trade is indicated by the language of the letters of permission which have made this book possible.) His songs have blanketed the globe. One of his prized souvenirs is a pirated Japanese phonograph record of *St. Louis Blues* out of a cave in Okinawa. The pirated Russian version is equally funny.

Handy truckles to no man, but most of his first and best supporters have been whites. Within his own race, he has had greater recognition from the masses than from some of the brasses, who are inclined at times to overvalue conventionality. One of his old songs is called *Sounding Brass and Tinkling Cymbal*. He has an ample sense of fun, but W. C. Handy does not tinkle. He is an artist, a trouper, a citizen, and a gentleman. His work will live, but he himself cannot be replaced.

IV. *THE MODERN BLUES AND JAZZ*

SAD HORNS

. . . orchestras which set the rhythm of the year, summing up the sadness and suggestiveness of life in new tunes. All night the saxophones wailed the hopeless comment of the "Beale Street Blues" while a hundred pairs of golden and silver slippers shuffled the shining dust. At the gray tea hour there were always rooms that throbbed incessantly with this low, sweet fever, while fresh faces drifted here and there like rose petals blown by the sad horns around the floor.

(*The Great Gatsby*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald.)

The "Blue Note"

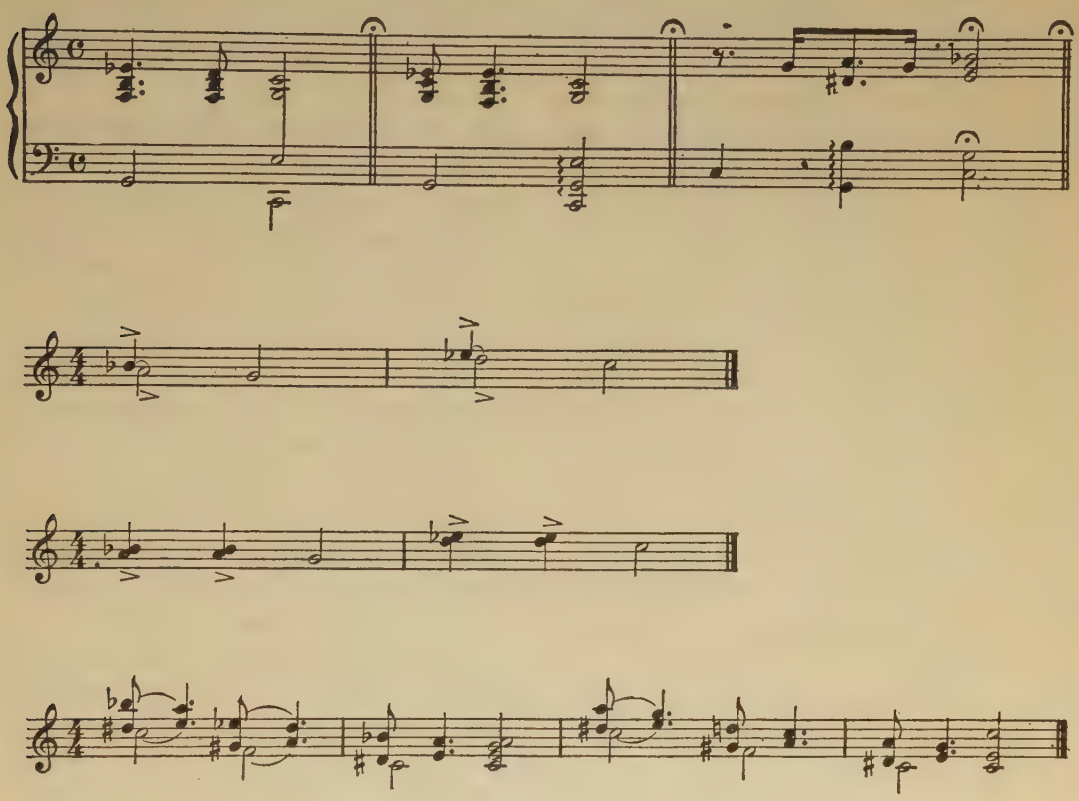
Handy's object when he wrote a blues was not confined to composing a pretty or a catchy song. He sought to speak in the language of the folk singers—meaning not merely their words and turns of thought, but their musical language. For this last purpose it was particularly necessary somehow to convey their typical slurring of the third note of the scale, which was a peculiarity of Negro folk singing generally, not merely the blues. One cannot reproduce on paper what a Bessie Smith would do to this note; it is necessary to work out conventions (see *Weeping Willow Blues*, p. 149). Handy's convention was the irregular introduction of the flatted third into his scripts. Thus the minor third might share a beat with

COVARRUBIAS

the major (*Memphis*, 2nd strain, 3rd and 4th bars, p. 60), or appear as a grace note to the major (*St. Louis*, 1st bar of melody proper, p. 71), or entirely replace the major. Since his compositions had a prevailing major, the effect of these transitory changes, to ears accustomed to the insipidities of Tin-Pan Alley, was strange and, after the first shock, interesting. Here were tunes with a third dimension; under their sweetness was something bitter.

Handy's interpolated flat third caught and held popular attention even more than the architectural scheme of his tunes—more than the features that stemmed exclusively from the folk-blues. It has acquired a name of its own: the "blue note." Since the white song writers have generally failed to absorb the twelve-bar blues form, their occasional use of the blue note is often the only musical feature that justifies them—from the historical standpoint—in using the name "blues." From the same strict standpoint, the title *Rhapsody in Blue* is a contradiction in terms, although many of the musical devices in Gershwin's little masterpiece, and the sardonic humor which they impart to the whole, are blues-inspired.

The "blue" slur had most commonly accompanied a stressing, or prolongation of the third, by the voice or instrument. Such a treatment was not possible at every point where the third might occur, but it was most characteristic when it coincided with the second-from-the-last syllable of a line of the words, or appeared as the corresponding note in the break which followed, as shown here:



The seventh is similarly treated, though to a lesser extent; and this secondary blue note is probably responsible for a device that rapidly became a cliché—though it was never used by Handy—that of ending the tune on the flatted seventh (first line, last bar of above examples) or even on the ninth.

Handy is also to be credited with the introduction of the *habañera* or tango rhythm (a dotted quarter, an eighth, and two quarter notes), which appears in the accompanying bass to some of his blues. This pattern, a striking contrast to the syncopation of the blues

tune, was implied in *Memphis* and explicit in *St. Louis Blues.* A plausible justification for its

use in jazz music, and an explanation of its popularity among Negroes, is that this is an African rhythm (the native word is *tangana*), Spanish only through adoption by the Moors. In this connection, it is interesting to note the current invasion of so-called "Afro-Cuban" rhythms into the field of "be-bop," the most recent innovation in orchestral jazz. The tango rhythm, incidentally, led directly into the Charleston, which is the same thing except that the two quarter notes are replaced by a half-note rest.

Jazz

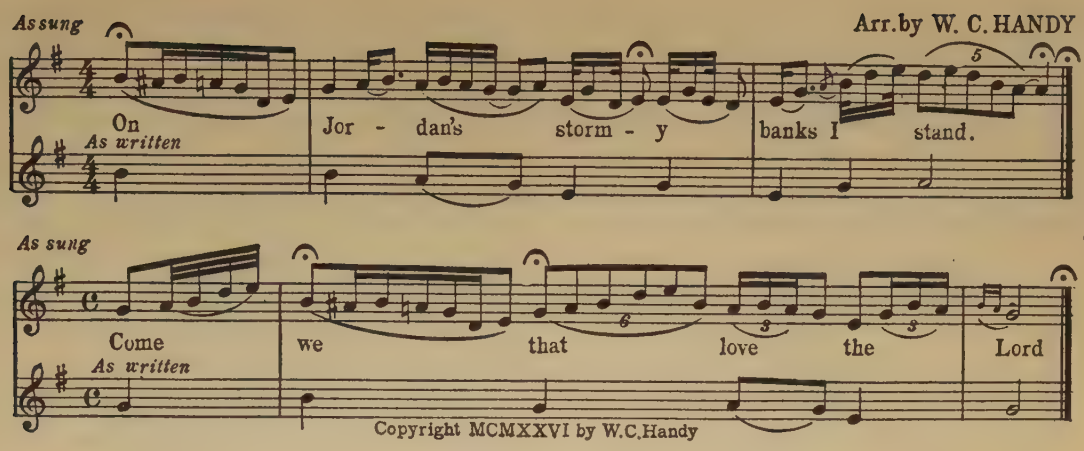
There are many stories accounting for the origin of the word "jazz," but the thing itself owes a great deal to the shortness of the three vocal lines in the old blues, previously discussed, and to the fact that this was observed by Handy and carried over into his writings. That short line left a gap which human nature could not resist filling in; the singers of the old folk-blues felt obliged to bridge any two lines with a "Lawdy," an "I mean," or a repetition:

Goin' where de Southern cross de Dawg—*cross dat Yaller Dawg,*
Goin' where de Southern cross de Yaller Dawg
—*cross dat Yaller Dawg,*—
Goin' where she cross—dat—Dawg.

As already observed, it would seldom be more elaborate than that, although a singer who played an instrument might improvise "breaks" at that point. (It should be noted that these instrumental figures, traditional or improvised, which filled in the pauses between lines of the blues, came to be called "the jazz.")

There was always, however, the incentive to do something better, or at least different from the improvisation the singer might have heard someone else execute. This powerful racial impulse toward competitive artistic effort (which you may observe in any group of little colored boys dancing at a street corner) is found, in singing, in the single voice trying to distinguish itself among the rest. Handy noticed its strength as a child, and in the most improbable circumstances: the singing, by large church congregations, of the "baptisin'" and "death and burial" songs. These were not spirituals, but old and familiar hymns written in long meter and sung to the old words—but as only Negroes sang them.

The preacher would "word" or "line out" the text, two lines at a time, in a semi-musical wail or shout. This was independent of the actual melody, and full of the flatted thirds and sevenths which Handy, remembering his boyhood impressions, was to set down years later as "blue notes." The congregation then sang the same two lines; the preacher lined out the next two, and so on throughout the song. As the congregation sang it, the hymn was retarded throughout, until as much as ten seconds might elapse between syllables; from every note each singer would start on a vocal journey of his own, wandering in strange pentatonic figures, but returning together at the proper moment to the next note of the melody. If one had succeeded in attracting attention by an exceptional note or a striking rhythmic figure, a dozen others would attempt, starting from the next note, to outdo him. To an unaccustomed listener close at hand, the result would be chaos, but at a distance the sounds merged into a strange and moving harmony. While the total effect of course cannot be transcribed, two examples of how a single voice might run its gamut are on the facing page.

This competitive instinct was not a part of the folk-blues, which, as already observed, were a one-man affair. But with the first performances of *Mister Crump* by the Handy Band, something new took place: at a certain point in the third part one musician would suddenly deviate from the score, putting in "licks" of his own creation. Until then this band, like every other dance orchestra, had played only what was set before it in black and white. But this time discipline fell before each musician's desire to fill in the fascinating break, if he could, more ingeniously than the others. When the encores came, each man put in his bid to

assert his individuality, just as had the church singers at the baptisings. The break contributed by Handy's violinist, Paul Wyer, in the version already shown on page 15, stemmed from this competition, and can thus be considered a direct descendant of *On Jordan's Stormy Banks.*

From then on Handy's musicians had a free hand in the breaks of his blues; and before long they found another means of self-expression, namely, by taking turns, chorus by chorus, in solo variations on the theme against the original harmonies and rhythmical background. This caught on with the white customers. They were not content to hear it in the blues alone, but began calling to "whip it up" (later, "jazz it up"), no matter what was being played; what they wanted was this competition in "hot choruses." Other bands began following suit, and not only colored bands: more than anyone else Honey Boy Evans' bandmaster, Eddie Cupero, carried and interpreted the *Memphis Blues,* in the Memphis manner, to the country in the Evans Minstrels' nation-wide tour of 1913. Years before "Dixieland" jazz broke on the big cities generally, the Memphis influence had been felt as far, to my own observation, as Connecticut, as anyone will confirm who ever heard Eddie Wittstein's orchestra play its version of the Negro Will Tyer's *Maori.* The break, meanwhile, had rapidly become a sort of Handy trademark. It first appeared in Wyer's *Memphis Blues* violin figure, which Handy carried over into *Jogo* (p. 67) in 1913 and even used in playing the *St. Louis Blues* of the following year. Then, in various striking forms, it was actually written into *Yellow Dog* (1914, p. 75), *Hesitating* and *Joe Turner* (1915, pp. 89, 93), *Beale Street* (1916, p. 102), and so on down the years. From the Handy Band this device spread to others, for Handy's orchestra, the most prominent in its own section, also journeyed far afield. Its home was on the Mississippi River; bands from St. Louis, New Orleans, and other cities also traveled up and down on the river boats: each group knew the others; they all exchanged personnel; and in general knew what was cooking on each other's stove.

At this point a bit of definition and distinction seems appropriate. It should be understood that I write from the standpoint of one interested in all of American folk-song and popular music: old, new, hot, cold; even sweet (if not too sweet) and bad (if bad enough). In a fairly long pursuit of this interest I have been able to observe the establishment of one new "school" after another, each basing its cult on some more or less important variation of treatment and some new name, and often regarding all other musical concepts with horror and aversion. Thus the "New Orleans" neo-classicists (meaning listeners and critics, not working musicians), whose attitude toward Gershwin was that, say, of Trotsky toward Kerensky, are themselves now coming to be regarded by adepts of the new "be-bop" school

with the same sort of hanging look that Stalin gave Trotsky. The offense is heresy, for what is concerned is creeds. This is not too unhealthy and is sometimes a good deal of fun, especially to a non-partisan, but it should be realized that these are basically internal wars, strictly inside jazz. Mr. Handy, by the way, is not very mad at anyone; it is largely his ammunition that the opponents are shooting at each other—and, sometimes, him.

For me, the present task is briefly to explore the influence of the blues upon American music —principally popular, largely jazz, subdivide it as you will. But to aid in the better understanding of this particular book, let me toss in my own understanding of the term "jazz." It is both a noun and a verb; any piece can be jazzed, and the result is jazz. The noun, accordingly, denotes two things: first, a way of playing music; second, music thus produced, or written for such treatment or to simulate the jazz effect. Since that effect is best and most often conveyed by virtuoso instrumentalists, these distinctions have become blurred, and jazz itself becomes confused with *people*. Serious writers, let alone the public, identify jazz with individual bands and performers and their phonograph records, so that weighty treatises credit Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag* or Carmichael's *Riverboat Shuffle* to a given band or player, to the entire exclusion of the composer himself.

The underlying principles of jazz (apart from rhythmical and accentual complexities that need no analysis here) are surprise, shock, a grim humor which can rise to irony, and competition for attention and applause.[6] Thus, in the very broadest sense, such a work as Richard Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel* is full of jazz (and of blue notes), but to keep the definition useful it is best to confine it to its American techniques, which have become more or less systematized.

The jazz effect may be conveyed by *strange sounds* and tone qualities produced by the various band instruments (*e.g.*, the "wah-wah" sounds, the muted trumpet, the laughing or half-strangled trombone). This method, especially when applied *ensemble* in free polyphonic improvisation (or, to the unaccustomed ear, in pandemonium), is most often associated with New Orleans, with a brass, reed, and percussion instrumentation (pianos absent or subordinate), and with a steady 4-4 beat. The Memphis technique (developed out of the blues form by the Handy Band) has been more or less submerged by the cries of the New Orleans devotees and pitchmen, but it is something quite distinct and different. In this tradition, the same ultimate effects are produced, originally against a 2-4 beat, by *strange musical figures* which do not attempt to overpower the main theme or each other, but which fill in the breaks in the melodic main line. The blues break-figures are independent little solo tunes or themes in themselves with their own rhythms and accents, their own steep angular lines, and their own grotesque, witty, angry, or passionate comments.

This is the very stuff of that part of jazz which can be written down, and its use in the breaks was soon extended to entire "hot choruses," taken by the various solo instruments in turn, in which they offer their individual and often improvised variations on the original air or against the same basic harmonic structure, before "going to town" together in the finale. A good example of "take your turn," as applied to the breaks only, may be found in James Reese Europe's Pathé record of *Memphis Blues*, made in 1917 or '18.[7]

It would be inaccurate to say that the *Memphis Blues* breaks were the first breaks ever played. The point is that it was through them, and through the Handy Band's exploitation, that the breaks—and the kind of jazz that developed from them—set forth on their way to becoming standard technique. They then consolidated their position through the later Handy blues and through the early experiments of other writers following his lead. It is certain that the breaks were emphatically exploited and acclaimed in Memphis from 1909 on, and there is no evidence that they had ever

[6] Getting attention was the first practical problem of the little, moneyless, Negro street bands of the sort casually noticed, from early days, by writers on the Southern scene.

[7] Handy's own 1917 recordings were made with a personnel mostly picked up in Chicago, since his own men did not want to come to New York; and they did not include his blues.

previously taken any real hold elsewhere. For that matter, the only testimony I have been able to find that the so-called "blues" reputedly played in New Orleans by Negro bands before *Mister Crump, were* blues at all, has been either without apparent means of knowledge or from romantically unreliable sources.

The titles cited by the New Orleans proponents neither include the name (except for the obvious misnomer *Careless Love Blues*—see pp. 46, 240) nor suggest the thing itself. Contemporaneous phonograph records are of course lacking; and the fact that the first three pieces published under the name of "blues" all rushed off the presses within two months of each other, in 1912, is highly suggestive. (One of these three, *The Memphis Blues,* was of course already three years old, under its original title.)

But even to make a rough inventory and appraisal of New Orleans Negro jazz required an operation somewhat similar to what would have been involved in reproducing Jenny Lind. The original musical product preceded the popularity of the phonograph, and was therefore never recorded in its native habitat. It made its first real splash outside when the Brown Brothers' orchestra and the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, both *white,* visited Chicago in 1915 and 1916, and it was in this translated form that it finally achieved nation-wide attention and was permanently set down for posterity, through the 1917 records of the Dixieland outfit. It was late in 1917 that Storyville, the New Orleans red-light district, was closed down, driving many leading Negro instrumentalists northward, and helping to make Chicago the center of jazz activity. In Chicago the varying styles appear to have become merged, and the combination further modified, by both whites and Negroes. It was not until much later that a reconstruction of the Negro New Orleans style, and the original recordings of the Dixieland offshoot, came successively to be re-isolated as something "classical," to be collected in first editions, reissued by "hot societies," and transformed in published books, both American and foreign, into a dogma couched in the fanciest of language.

But in the significant year 1917, it should be remembered, Handy's *Memphis Blues* was five years old (eight as *Mister Crump*), his *Jogo* was four, his *St. Louis* and *Yellow Dog* were three, *Hesitating* and *Joe Turner* were two, and *Beale Street Blues* had appeared early that year. These, along with a few other authentic blues specimens from other sources, the Scott Joplin rags, and the favorite New Orleans novelties, were by then the teething rings of any budding jazz musicians.

V. *THE PIONEERS*

Both whites and Negroes have contributed to the ascendancy of the real blues. On the list of pioneers, first mention should be made of the original Handy bandsmen who played for Mr. Crump's election campaign. The first-line members were Ed and Paul Wyer and Jim Turner, violins; Archie Walls, bass viol; George Higgins, guitar and vocals; George Williams, trombone; Robert Young, clarinet; and James Osborne, saxophone (one of the first to play that instrument in any dance orchestra, he later "got religion" and joined the House of David). Handy himself played cornet, and in those days was widely known as a virtuoso. (He is still at it. As I write in 1949, he has just taken time off from business for an engagement with the singer Pearl Bailey at Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe in New York.) Never having been recorded, the high caliber of this band (which, for society affairs, had to maintain a repertoire of seventeen different kinds of dances) now lives only in the memory of those who heard it all over Memphis and in the schools and communities of the lower Mississippi Valley. Other regulars of the Handy syndicate, as it developed after *Mr. Crump,* included: *Pianos,* Benny French, Charles Hillman, Eugene Lewis, H. P. (Buddy) McGill; *Violins,* Edward D. Alexander, Richard K. Eckford, James H. Jordan, Richard Ross, Powells Thornton; *Singing Guitarists,* Rufus Ross, Moses Waller, Guy Williams, Ed Winters; *Clarinets and Saxophones,* Charles H. Booker, A. Fitzgiles, George Harris, William King

Phillips, Wilson Townes, T. J. Williams; *Trumpets*, C. W. Blake, R. A. Campbell, Johnny Dunn, John W. Lewis, Matthew Thornton, Charlie Williamson; *Trombones*, G. H. Abernathy, Sylvester V. Bevard, Ezekiel M. Davis, G. I. DesVerney, Alex M. Hunt, Alex M. Valentine; *Basses*, Walter Fulks, Henry Hurt, William H. Means, Bill Stewart; *Drums and Xylophone*, Sam H. Baker, O. C. Claxton, Walter Crews, Jasper Taylor; *Flute*, James H. Pratt; *Cello*, Henry Graves.

Next credit should go to a white man, Eddie Cupero (see p. 23), who is pictured with his band on the cover of the first vocal edition of *Memphis Blues*, published in 1913. Wilbur C. Sweatman made some of the very earliest blues records, including Handy's *Joe Turner*, for the now-defunct Pathé and Emerson companies. Sweatman had a personal specialty of playing three clarinets at once (he told me in 1925: "I could play *four*, but you ruin your face and don't get any extra credit"). The first to record *Memphis Blues* (for Pathé, 1917 or '18) was James Reese Europe, formerly musical director for the Vernon Castles and then for the 369th Infantry; his early death ended what could have been a great career. Handy's first-string band regarded a recording trip to New York as a visionary and impractical adventure, so that the group with which he actually first recorded for Columbia in 1917 was made up of four from Memphis, four Chicago musicians, and four early Handy men also picked up in Chicago. Save for a twelve-bar waltz (*Moonlight Blues*), they confined themselves to the conventional hits, but they served to launch a "National Handy Week" which indirectly helped to consolidate the blues vogue.

Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton, an erratic genius who once claimed to have "discovered jazz in 1902," was a fascinating personality as well as a brilliant composer, pianist, singer, and orchestra leader in the fields of blues and jazz. He was a talker of great fluency, interest, and (to put it mildly) creative imagination; ninety-six record sides made by the Library of Congress, on which he played and talked about early jazz history, have equally entertained, instructed, and misled students of New Orleans jazz. He is not represented in this anthology only because a collection of his own work is approaching publication. Clarence and Spencer Williams, both giants in the blues, also deserve mention, and are discussed in the notes to their songs (pp. 247, 249).

A great line of contraltos brought the blues before the public. Perhaps the first of them was the deep-voiced "Ma" Rainey, a now almost legendary figure who habitually wore a necklace of gold eagles. Her Paramount "race records" are now rare collectors' items. She was followed by no less than five famous Smiths, all Negroes: Clara—who was billed as the World's Greatest Moaner; Trixie, Laura, Mamie—first of her sex to record a typically Negroid popular song (it was Perry Bradford's *You Can't Keep a Good Man Down*); and the immortal Bessie, the Empress of the Blues. Bessie was fired from her first recording connection, with Harry Pace's Black Swan Company—in the midst of a job she forgot where she was and said: "Hol' on a moment while I spit." But Black Swan went broke, while Bessie, with Columbia, went on to fame though not to fortune (more about her in the notes to *Weeping Willow Blues*, p. 247). Today, many years after the heyday of the five Smiths, they can fortunately still be heard from the old records many of which, particularly those of Bessie, have been reissued by Columbia.

Osceola and Berliana Blanks played a pioneer role in putting over *The Memphis Blues* as a song, starting in a cabaret on 105th Street, New York, and taking it all over the country; but it was Alice Leslie Carter who introduced *Memphis* to Broadway, in a rathskeller under the old Columbia Burlesque Theater. Irving C. Miller was much impressed with *Memphis* as sung by the Blanks girls; when *St. Louis* and *Yellow Dog* came along he not only took them around with his road show, but even carried a stock of sheet music for sale to his audiences. Ethel Waters, still fit and famous today, had much to do with making *St. Louis* known to New York. Alberta Hunter, one of the greatest of blues singers, introduced *Loveless Love* at the Dreamland Café in Chicago. Another blues-singing pioneer was the inimitable vaudevillian

known as String Beans, who improvised verses to his own blues tunes throughout his turn at the old Monogram Theater, a stand-by of Chicago Negroes. His "Elgin" song ended:

I was on that great *Titanic*
When it went down,
The people wondered
Why I didn't drown.
I had them Elgin movements in my hips—
Twenty years' guarantee!

For some reason his audience professed to hate him; they hissed him, but they always stayed rooted to their seats until his personal finale:

If anyone asks you, has String Beans been along,
If anyone asks you, has String Beans been along,—
Jus' tell 'em String Beans been here, done got his, an' gone.

Dave Peyton, formerly musical editor of the Chicago *Defender*, transcribed innumerable blues from the folk-forms in which they had been sung by illiterate Negroes. Lovie Austin, herself an accomplished blues pianist, arranged String Beans' tunes for the Monogram orchestra, and performed the same function for Paramount's "race records" in the '20s. Two white brothers named Leighton arranged and published *Frankie and Johnny*, but most white singers were slow to recognize the uses of the blues. Blossom Seeley, however, sang Handy's *Hesitating Blues* in 1916; Gilda Gray and *Beale Street* helped make each other famous; and Marion Harris had the blues manner so much at her command that thousands of Negroes bought her records under the impression that she was one of them.

Although in recent years an increased interest in folk-song has helped bring the early blues to the attention of folklorists, comparatively few students were quick to note the place of blues in the picture. The Negro poet James Weldon Johnson was perhaps the first to call attention to the roots which Handy had uncovered (Johnson, with his brother Rosamund and Bob Cole, in the '90s and early 1900s formed a famous song-writing team, some of whose work, by pure coincidence, appeared under the pen name "Will Handy"). Dorothy Scarborough and Carl Van Vechten also wrote enthusiastically about the blues more than twenty years ago, and a number of facts in this text were first set down in articles by Van Vechten which appeared in *Vanity Fair* in 1925 and '26.

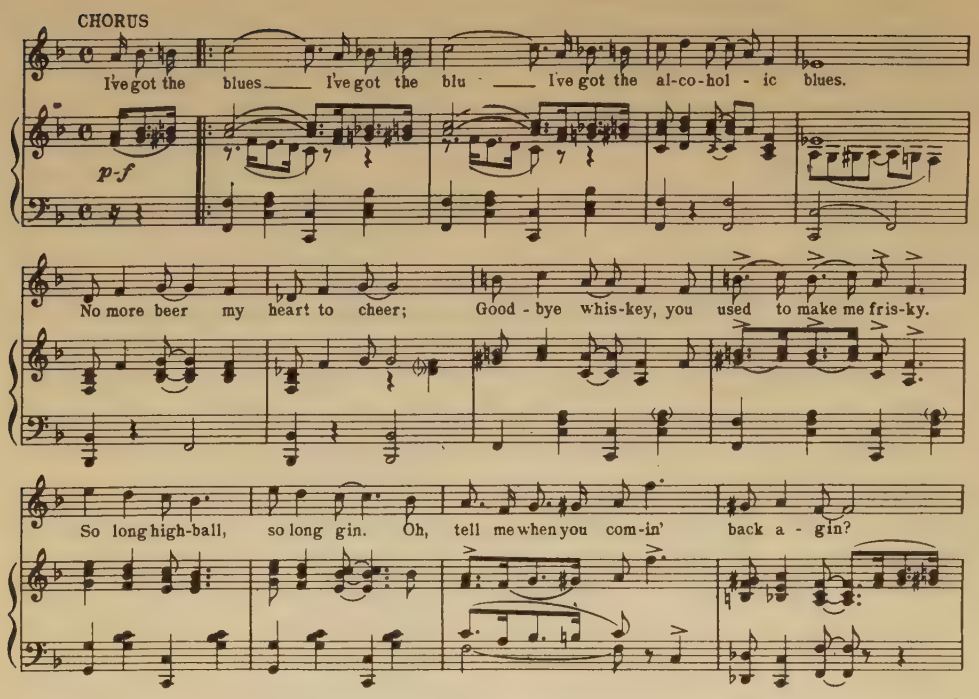
As for the early Negro composers in the old tradition and the later ones of both races, their songs in this collection and the notes at the end of the volume will speak for them.

VI. *INFLUENCE OF THE BLUES ON POPULAR SONGS*

The popularity of the first published blues resulted at the outset in the borrowing of the magic name by various song writers; then they took up the jazz idea and the blue note. In a wholesale outburst of popular tunes, almost every Southern town was endowed—generally from New York—with its own private blues. By 1915 the supply of near-by geography had dwindled, and the expeditionary forces had reached the Far East (see *Chinese Blues*, p. 184). By 1919 a clever white parody was ready to take its place as the dirge for legal liquor, and on the last night in January of that year it could be heard in many a barroom throughout the land. It appears, in part, at the top of the following page.

The Old World was soon made aware of the new musical style. In 1917, Jim Europe, with his 369th Infantry Band and Handy's earliest songs, went to France and indoctrinated the natives. France in particular has remained an enthusiastic audience for Negro blues and jazz musicians; and various modern European composers have made use of the idiom, with varying degrees of understanding: Honegger, Stravinsky, Wiener (who published avowed "blues"), and Milhaud, to whom, according to the French critic Robert Goffin, Handy's *Aunt Hagar* was of "tremendous service" in the writing of his *Creation of the World*.

The blues spirit appealed to each of the three leading white song writers of the period following the publication of Handy's first tunes: Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, and Jerome


CHORUS
I've got the blues I've got the blu I've got the al-co-hol - ic blues.
p-f
No more beer my heart to cheer; Good - bye whis-key, you used to make me fris-ky.
So long high-ball, so long gin. Oh, tell me when you com-in' back a - gin?

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Kern. In 1920, Kern copyrighted the *Left-All-Alone Again Blues* (his lyricist, Anne Caldwell, thus starting the fashion of lengthy, explicit titles), and in the following year the *Blue Danube Blues*. He lent us the first of these for the original edition of this book (his death deprives us now). He later used the classical blues form as the verse to *Can't Help Lovin' That Man* (*Show Boat*), perhaps the only such example ever published by a white composer. Among Irving Berlin's early contributions were the *Schoolhouse* (p. 196) and *Tokio Blues*. As to Gershwin, more hereafter.

A few American composers then attempted "symphonic" treatments of blues themes. John Alden Carpenter included a *Katnip Blues* in his *Krazy Kat Ballet* of 1924 (p. 230). Late in 1925 Harry Yerkes' orchestra performed, at New York's Carnegie Hall, nothing less than a symphony in four movements, Alberte Chiaffarelli's *Jazz America*, based entirely on the *Beale Street, St. Louis*, and—oddly enough—the British *Limehouse Blues*. (Handy has published the *St. Louis* movement as *Blue Destiny*.) But the only long compositions in this category that have achieved the first rank of popularity are George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue, Concerto in F*, and *An American in Paris*.

Between then and now there have been many tunes bearing—and some deserving—the name "blues," but far more significant than the label has been the lasting, over-all effect of Handy's work on American popular music. Before Handy, American popular song had periodically benefited, or even been rescued from the doldrums, by Afro-American inspirations, which white composers or lyric writers had been able to borrow and adapt with much facility. It is a hackneyed Southern white saying that the Negro is "just like a monkey" (*i.e.*, an imitator), but it is the whites themselves who have filled the books with their imitations of Negro song and dialect. Indeed, the stimulating and improving effect of Negro talk, dance, and song upon the work of American whites (even if devoted to deriding their source) has been an extraordinary and a long-term phenomenon. It was apparent in Micah Hawkins' dialect songs of the 1820s, with *Jump Jim Crow* of 1830, in *Old Zip Coon* (*Turkey in the*

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Straw) of 1834, in the minstrel songs of the '40s, which culminated in the inspired and original work of the white Stephen Foster in the lyrical plantation-song manner, and in the stirring dialect songs of the '60s, *Dixie* and *Kingdom Comin'*. There had apparently also been a reverse contribution of form and verbal expressions—by the white camp-meeting hymns to the Negro spirituals. But the evidence that the loan involved the melodies themselves to any appreciable extent is not convincing. Meanwhile the Negro spiritual tunes were finding their way into the product of white commercial song writers, who had a ready source at hand after the publication of W. F. Allen's pioneer volume, *Slave Songs of the United States*. It was not until the '80s that the Negro came into a position to sell his own music: such songs (in the very tradition of *Zip Coon* and *Dixie*) as James Bland's *Golden Slippers* and (in the best "plantation" vein) his *Carry Me Back to Old Virginny*, which is now the official state song. By the '90s we had the "coon songs," early in this century, "ragtime," and we were already on the threshold of blues and jazz.

All this time, however, instrumentation had been backward—the air was almost the whole thing, the accompaniment mere strumming. In the early 1900s the piano, at least, was rescued from its lowly condition—again by a Negro, the gifted and unfortunate Scott Joplin. Like many innovators of popular and profitable musical forms, he lived in poverty, and died insane. But he ushered in a new order—that of the brilliant and difficult instrumental exercises, the "rags," such as his own *Maple Leaf Rag*, prototype of the white Zez Confrey's *Kitten on the Keys*. Irving Berlin's first great triumph was, of course, *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, which appeared between the writing and the first publication of *Memphis Blues*. But when the blues finally burst into the dance hall, they found themselves part of a world of popular music which shared a common characteristic and a common weakness: it was almost all emotionally one-sided. The *Ragtime Band* was all jubilance; the descendants of the "coon songs" were all animal spirits; the "ballads" all syrup or all lugubriousness.

Memphis Blues had a new and subtler essence; it was two-sided and, therefore, disturbing. As a campaign song, it had enthusiasm and exuberance, but there was also an undertone of dissent. It suggested convincingly, without words, that one certainly must vote for Mr. Crump; but it definitely withheld any guarantee that Mr. Crump was infallible, and it could even have been hinting that the things which were not so hot then might not be too different after his election. It had a tone, not of weak despondency or shallow cuteness, but of the mocking, ironic, or defiant discontent of the old folk-blues. It is this undertone, whether represented by the blue note or any other device, that has crept into our popular music, has enriched and still enriches it, transforming it at times from the expression of one of many superficial emotions to something of deeper and more lasting value.

The real twelve-bar blues are still produced in a steady stream, mostly for the phonograph records, but they are still practically a Negro monopoly. It is in the so-called "blues song" (*i.e.*, in free form but with a liberal admixture of blues philosophy or musical tricks) that the whites enter the competition, and in their work the blue content may vary all the way down to a trace.

Among the leaders, George Gershwin, an acknowledged devotee of the blues and admirer of Handy, had too many kinds of things to say to confine himself to blues language, but it speaks strongly in his long orchestral pieces and his piano preludes as well as in *Porgy and Bess* and the one-act tragedy *135th Street*. In his songs it can be heard most clearly in the more emotional examples (*The Man I Love*, *Soon*), but it may crop out anywhere in a phrase or a note (*Somebody Loves Me*, *Stairway to Paradise*, *How Long Has This Been Going On*, *Sam and Delilah*, *Lady Be Good*). He felt a special affinity for the flatted seventh and was ingenuously proud of having led off with that tone in *Nashville Nightingale*, and he wrote a yet unpublished *Blues in Two Keys* which I should like to see.

Cole Porter's sophisticated and polished creations are out of touch with the blues spirit, but

he too can use their tricks, or adapt them to his own flavor: *What Is This Thing Called Love, I Love You, Too Darned Hot*, and the strange minor-major ambiguities of *I'm Unlucky at Gambling*. Berlin, most versatile of song writers, dips in at will (*Pack Up Your Sins*, and the Afro-Russian *Miss Lonely Hearts*) and out again. Richard Rodgers very perfectly conveys the wide range of what he has to say with less borrowed accent, blues or otherwise, than would seem possible. The blues can't claim him. Arthur Schwartz can ignore the blues and go back through the *Dixie* vein to Scotland for a rousing Negro chorus (*Louisiana Hayride*), or he can use a blue note or so to flavor a torch song —*Can't We Be Friends?*

Three white men of extraordinary talent—in words, music, and performance alike—are all more or less saturated with blue. These are Willard Robison (*The Devil Is Afraid of Music, 'Tain't So Honey 'Taint So, Lazy Levee Loungers*), Hoagy Carmichael (*Washboard Blues, Rockin' Chair, Lazy Bones*—the last written with Mercer), and Johnny Mercer (*Blues in the Night* and *Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive* with Harold Arlen, *G.I. Jive*, and many others). As for Arlen himself as a composer, his blue may sometimes be vivid, as in *Stormy Weather*, or it may be a mere tinge in the most delicate of tunes (*Ill Wind, Fun to Be Fooled*), as it is also in Vernon Duke's *April in Paris*.

There has, of course, always been a plentiful miscellany, of both white and colored origin, down through the years: such songs as *Am I Blue, Black and Blue, Ain't Misbehavin'* (best known of several by the great jazz pianist and singer, Fats Waller), *Sugar, Underneath the Harlem Moon*, etc. The "swing" era produced blues-tinged tunes like *Christopher Columbus, Organ Grinder's Swing, The Jumpin' Jive, The Dipsy Doodle;* and the hits of the World War II period included such as *Shoo-Shoo-Shoo Baby* and *Milkman, Keep Those Bottles Quiet*.

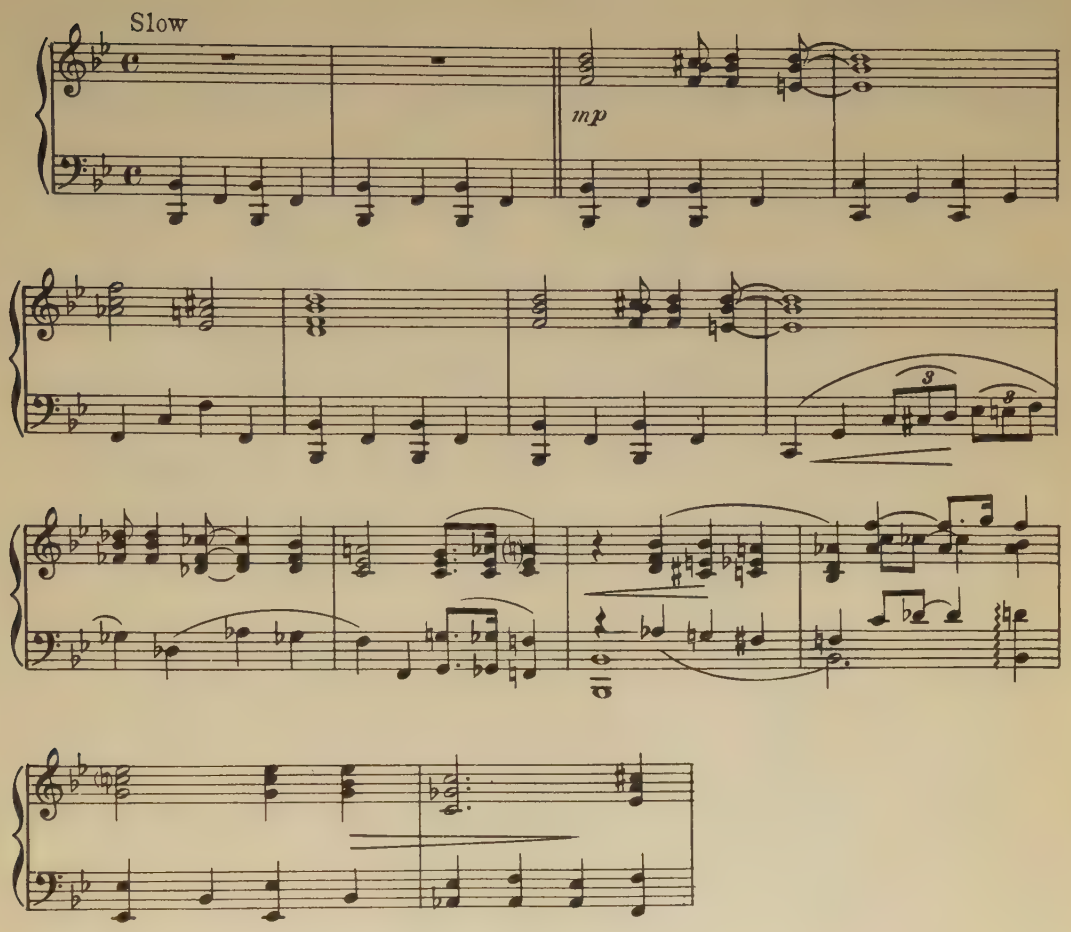
Fletcher Henderson, Count Basie, Louis Armstrong, and Cab Calloway have created more that is in the blues tradition on phonograph records than in print, though Basie and Calloway are credited with distinctive published works as well. Since the late '20s that giant of the piano, orchestral effect, and composition, Duke Ellington, has remained a significant figure. While his publisher's policy precludes his being represented here as he deserves, we are glad to present at least an excerpt from his *Mood Indigo* (on facing page).

A word as to Paul Whiteman. From the number of pages indexed to his name in almost any book on hot jazz one may know in advance how often he has been insulted in the text. I, too, do not particularly care for "sweet jazz," yet I should like to risk the scorn of partisans by testifying that Whiteman has quite a band, that it took courage and ability first to perform the Gershwin *Rhapsody in Blue* and *Concerto in F* (as it did for Damrosch to introduce *An American in Paris*), and that Whiteman tided things over from the first shock of "Dixieland" until the public was tough enough to take its hot jazz neat.

Handy himself, in all this time, has ranged little further afield from the genuine blues than to the spirituals, which he remembers from his youth and preserves in arrangements and orchestrations. He has, in short, continued to speak his native language, and his work has thus not only kept its fascination for the "alien," but has been joyfully accepted by the rank and file of American Negroes, something which the white impressions of the Negro have always failed to achieve. He has never professed to "improve" the snatches of folk-song that appear here and there in his songs. If in fact his development of some overheard wail or musical ejaculation was an improvement, it carried on *in the original direction*—as any folk-singer of talent might have carried it on for the pleasure of his listeners. When he drew on his own ample fund of original melody, it was in the same vein; it was still Handy speaking for his race. So, his own people would accept his tunes, his verses, and promptly start in adding more verses for the tunes. So much of this took place, even in his first years of writing, that it would be impossible to place all those quoted in this book as pre- or post-Memphis. Some of them may be heard on the early "race records" or on their

Mood Indigo

By DUKE ELLINGTON
IRVING MILLS
and ALBANY BIGARD



9

successors of today. Most or all of them were probably remembered by the singers rather than written to be sung; they are part of what is virtually a language by itself. To recognize it, see the verses of the old blues in this book. Handy's own lyrics are a prime example of this common speech; yet I have come to realize in more than one case over the years that some expression which he had always credited as from "folk" sources was of his own coinage—it was all the same to him.

One sad note as to the singing of blues and blues songs (and other songs) in these days: too many singers, like too many instrumentalists, have succumbed to the delusion that what they must put over is themselves, and that the way to do that is to ignore the melody and substitute only their own improvised vocal meanderings. They didn't do this in Memphis, but it must be conceded to be a logical result of the Memphis jazz technique, as now applied by people with voices but without taste. For the brighter side, consider what someone with voice, invention, and taste, such as Maxine Sullivan, can do without any legitimate offense, by way of vocal jazz variations on Scotch folk-songs, and also listen to Benny Goodman's Victor record, *Mr. Bach Goes to Town.*

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VII. *THE BLUES AND RECENT JAZZ*

On the subject of the influence of the blues, there remain to be considered the three main jazz waves that have reached us since the first edition of this book:

"Swing" is less a distinct method than a good trade-name which came to hand when, in the 1930s, hot jazz graduated from business school. The term is most useful to describe suspensions in form and rhythm, growing to build up a compression of excitement for effective release later. Top-flight musicians found a public eager to listen in on their jam sessions—previously conducted for fun, their "improvisations" (like the "sweet jazz" orchestrations of Whiteman) came often to be carefully tailored in advance. The most common product was a compromise between what the musicians liked to play and what the customers were strong enough to stand. More sophisticated rhythm instruments, politer hot choruses, a tap-tap beat: the blues influence was no stronger nor greatly diminished from what it had been, save that the blues are not polite.

By contrast, "boogie-woogie," which, after long incubation, came in with a roar a little later, from the springboard of an early record by "Pine Top" Smith (a Negro whose fame was posthumous), was almost pure blues: in the twelve-bar pattern and with the same three basic chords (see p. 14), but with a double beat ("eight to the bar"). This beat was given, against a syncopated treble, by a constantly repeated bass figure, or a "walking bass" as had been used as early as 1915 in Artie Mathews' *Weary Blues*. The bass might also be a modified tango figure, two to the bar comprising eight notes—as in *Yancey Special*. Boogie was primarily a glorification of honky-tonk blues piano jazz, its upper register a series of hot variations, full of the chirps of multiple grace notes or broken chords, creating often, with the *ostinato* bass, an exceedingly difficult rhythmical conflict. For this strenuous and exacting regime the best qualified performers seemed almost invariably to be powerful men, cubical in form, and with two rolls to the back of the neck; anyone less might sound all right for a time but could not be depended on to last, for this was no boy's work. The most famous team was Albert Ammons, Pete Johnson, and Meade (Lux) Lewis, working continuously, in shifts, at two uprights.

Swing was inclined to reject the unfortunate composer's tune but retain his harmonic scheme. The new "be-bop" (re-bop or bop), proclaimed as "progressive jazz," changes his harmony too, leaving—if anything—his title and phonograph royalties. The latest authoritative word on this, Leonard Feather's book *Inside Be-bop* (April, 1949), indicates that more than half the bop pieces written to date have been based on the chordal pattern of the blues, or of *I Got Rhythm, How High the Moon*, and a few other "standards." The original chords, however, are altered by inserting one or more discordant notes in each, as Stravinsky did—but better—in parts of *Petrouchka*. At that point the disappearance of the original composer's title and credit (and royalties as well) becomes logical, if not painless.

There are many other features to bop, which is written, rehearsed, and complex in its conventions. Most of these, however, such as the unresolved chromatic progressions of chords; the use of the voice, in nonsense syllables, to simulate instruments; intentionally misplaced beats and accents, etc., are not blues-born and hence not relevant to this book. It is interesting to note, though, the boppers' insistence on a flatted note—the fifth—and their passionate refusal to wind up on the common chord. Bop, according to its adherents, is not "hot" but "cool" jazz. While preserving an open mind and hoping for the promised progress, I cannot yet hear in bop any voice that seems—like the blues and the best hot jazz—somehow to speak of man's past or man's fate in man's accents, and I gravely fear that the be-bop school is off on a rather chilly detour.

Anyway—not to coin a phrase—it looks like the blues are here to stay.

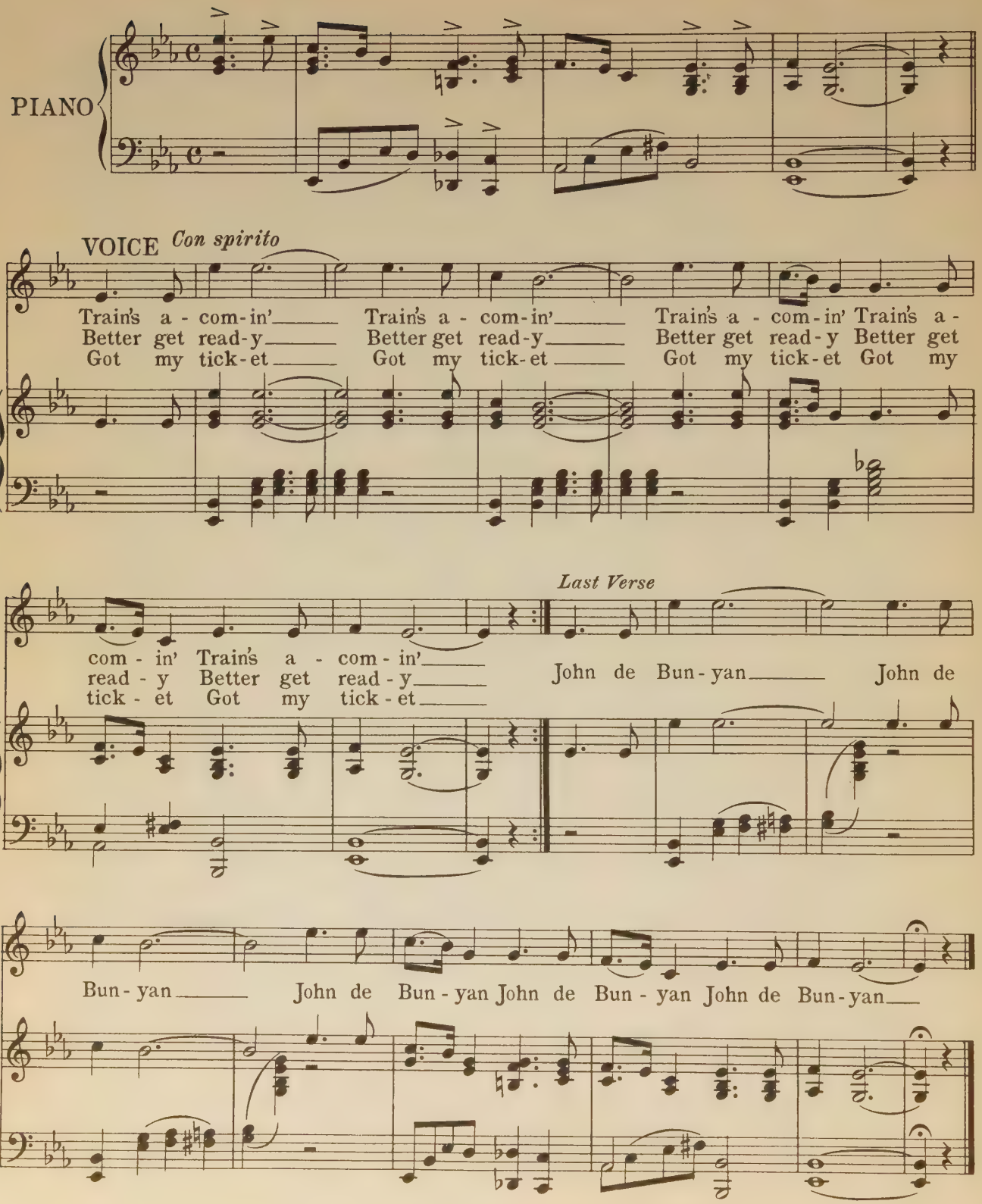
A. N.

COVARRUBIAS

THE BACKGROUND

TRAIN'S A-COMING

Arr. by W. C. HANDY


PIANO
VOICE
Con spirito
Train's a - com-in'_____ Train's a - com-in'_____ Train's a - com-in' Train's a -
Better get read-y_____ Better get read-y_____ Better get read-y Better get
Got my tick-et_____ Got my tick-et_____ Got my tick-et Got my
Last Verse
com - in' Train's a - com - in'_____
read - y Better get read - y_____
tick - et Got my tick - et_____
John de Bun - yan_____ John de
Bun - yan_____ John de Bun - yan John de Bun - yan John de Bun - yan_____

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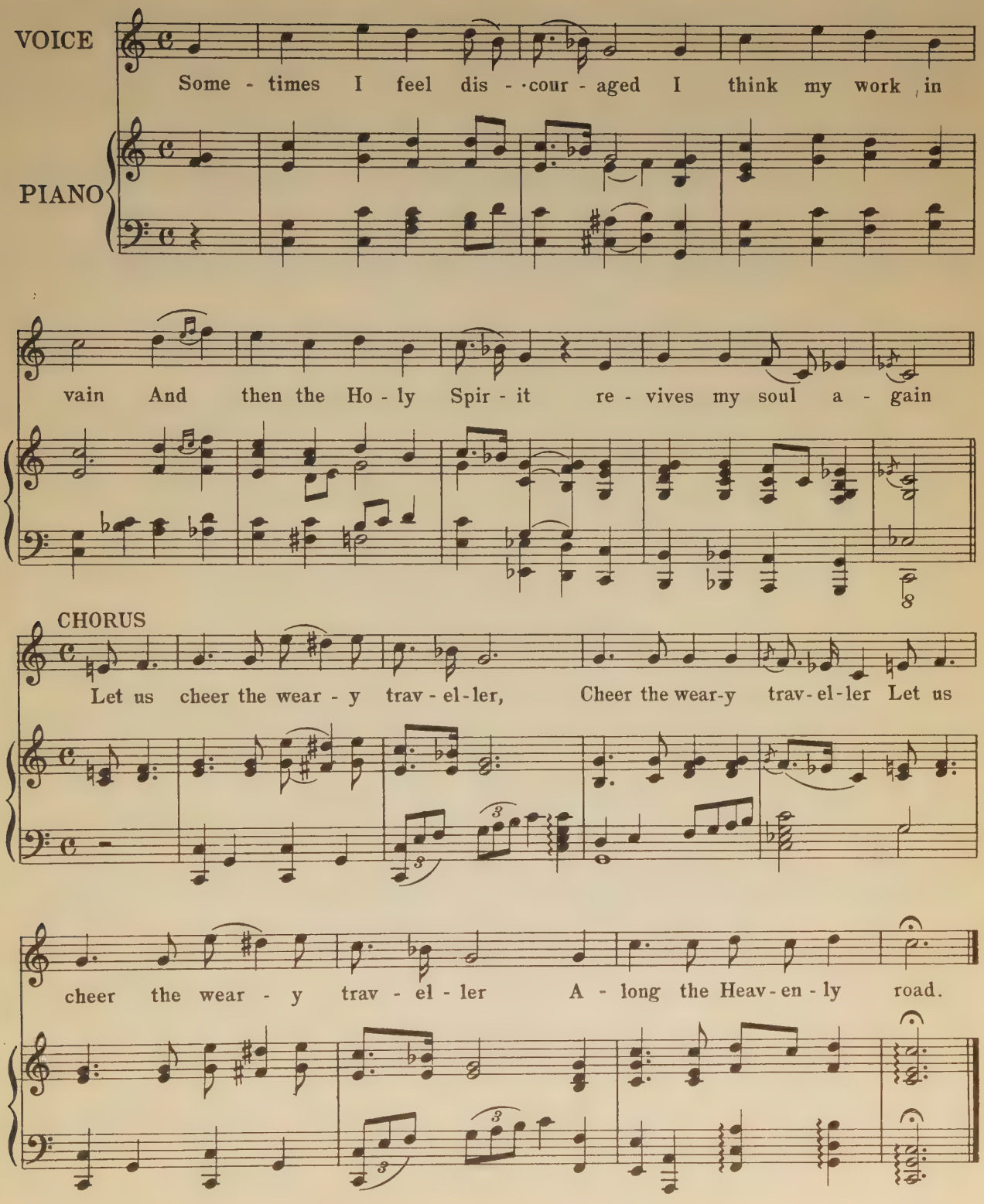
LET US CHEER THE WEARY TRAVELLER

Arr. by W.C. HANDY


VOICE
PIANO
Some - times I feel dis - - cour - aged I think my work in
vain And then the Ho - ly Spir - it re - vives my soul a - gain
CHORUS
Let us cheer the wear - y trav - el - ler, Cheer the wear-y trav - el - ler Let us
cheer the wear - y trav - el - ler A - long the Heav - en - ly road.

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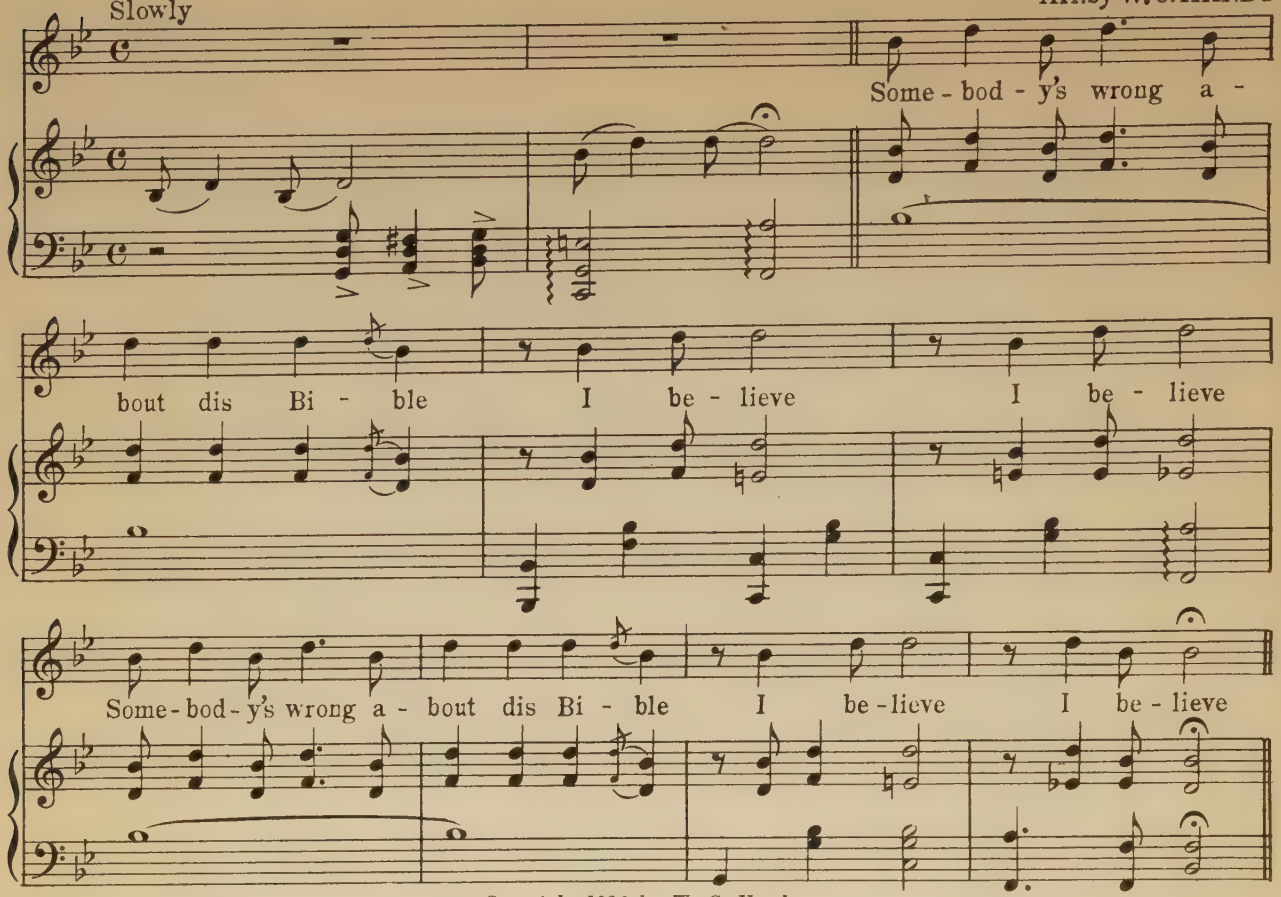
SOMEBODY'S WRONG ABOUT DIS BIBLE

Arr. by W. C. HANDY



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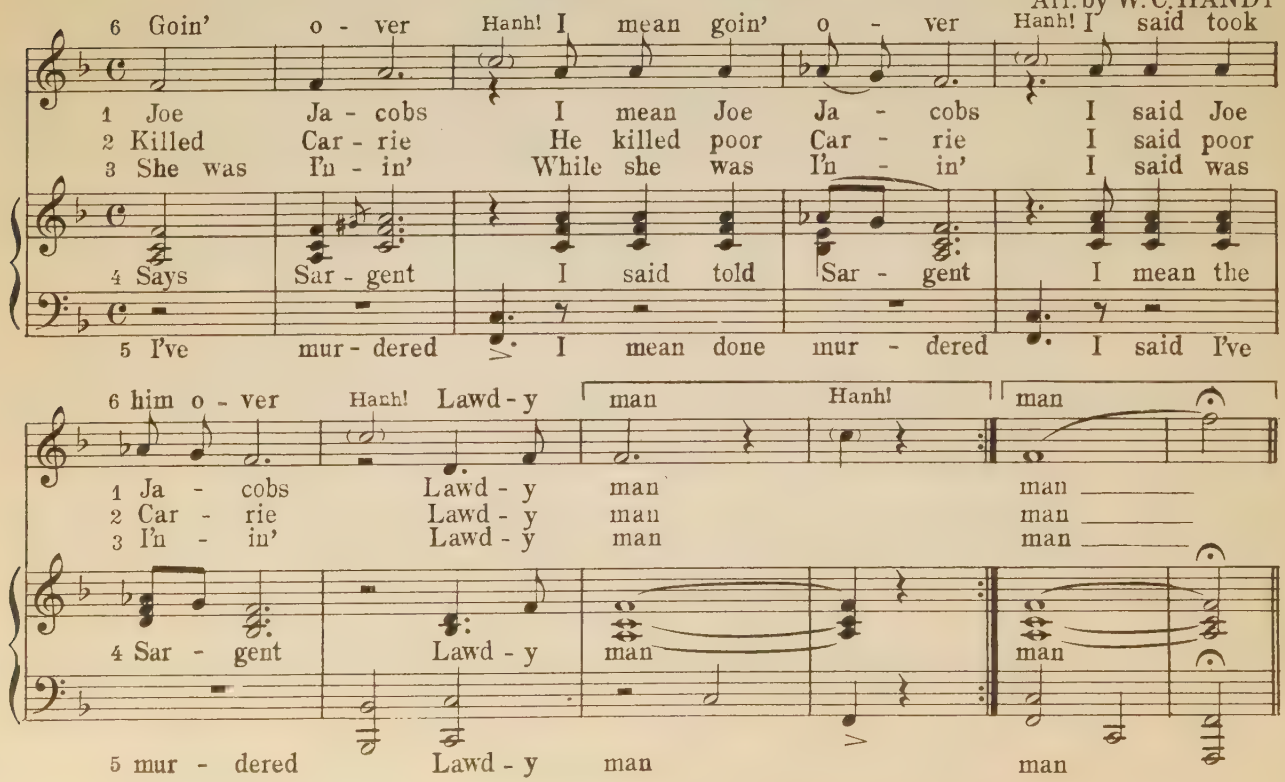
JOE JACOBS

Arr. by W. C. HANDY


6 Goin' o - ver Hanh! I mean goin' o - ver Hanh! I said took
1 Joe Ja - cobs I mean Joe Ja - cobs I said Joe
2 Killed Car - rie He killed poor Car - rie I said poor
3 She was I'n - in' While she was I'n - in' I said was
4 Says Sar - gent I said told Sar - gent I mean the
5 I've mur - dered I mean done mur - dered I said I've
6 him o - ver Hanh! Lawd - y man Hanh! man
1 Ja - cobs Lawd - y man man
2 Car - rie Lawd - y man man
3 I'n - in' Lawd - y man man
4 Sar - gent Lawd - y man man
5 mur - dered Lawd - y man man

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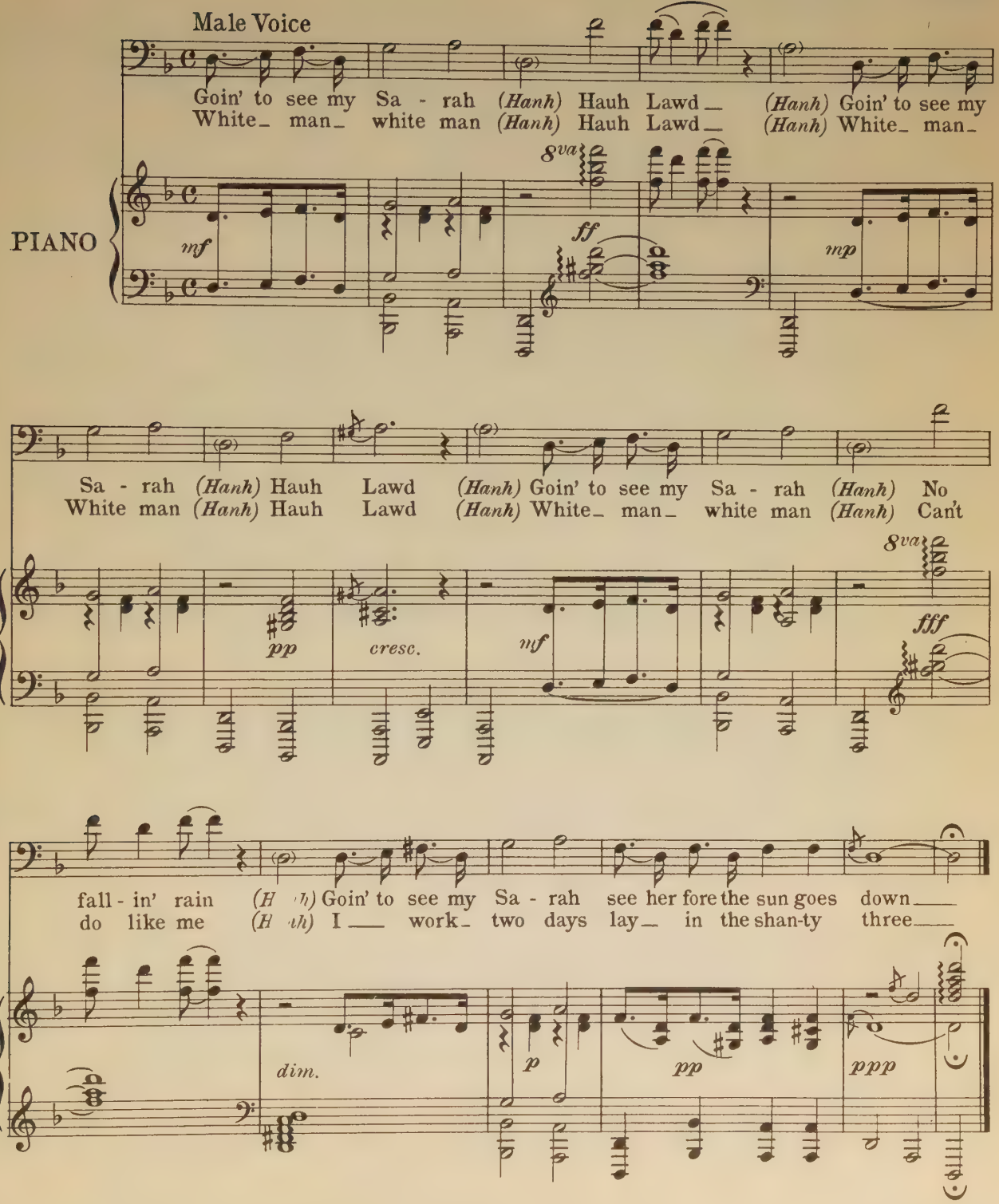
GOIN' TO SEE MY SARAH

Arr. by W. C. HANDY


Male Voice
PIANO
Goin' to see my Sa - rah (Hanh) Hauh Lawd (Hanh) Goin' to see my
White man white man (Hanh) Hauh Lawd (Hanh) White man
8va
mf
ff
mp
Sa - rah (Hanh) Hauh Lawd (Hanh) Goin' to see my Sa - rah (Hanh) No
White man (Hanh) Hauh Lawd (Hanh) White man white man (Hanh) Can't
pp
cresc.
mf
8va
fff
fall - in' rain (Hanh) Goin' to see my Sa - rah see her fore the sun goes down
do like me (Hanh) I work two days lay in the shan-ty three
dim.
p
pp
ppp

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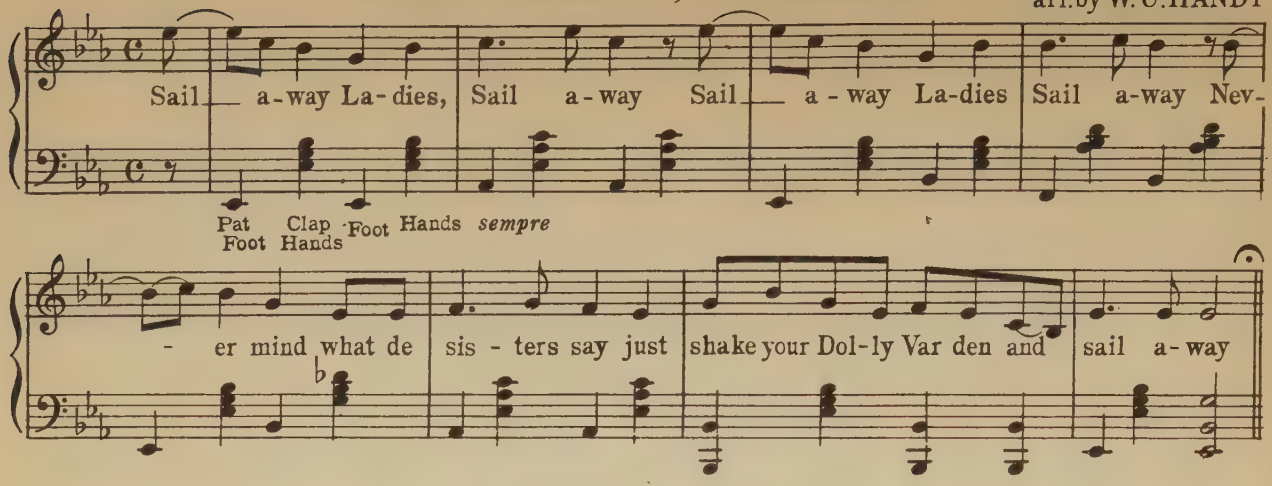
SAIL AWAY, LADIES

arr. by W. C. HANDY


Sail a-way La-dies, Sail a-way Sail a-way La-dies Sail a-way Nev-
Pat Foot Clap Hands Foot Hands sempre
- er mind what de sis - ters say just shake your Dol-ly Var den and sail a-way

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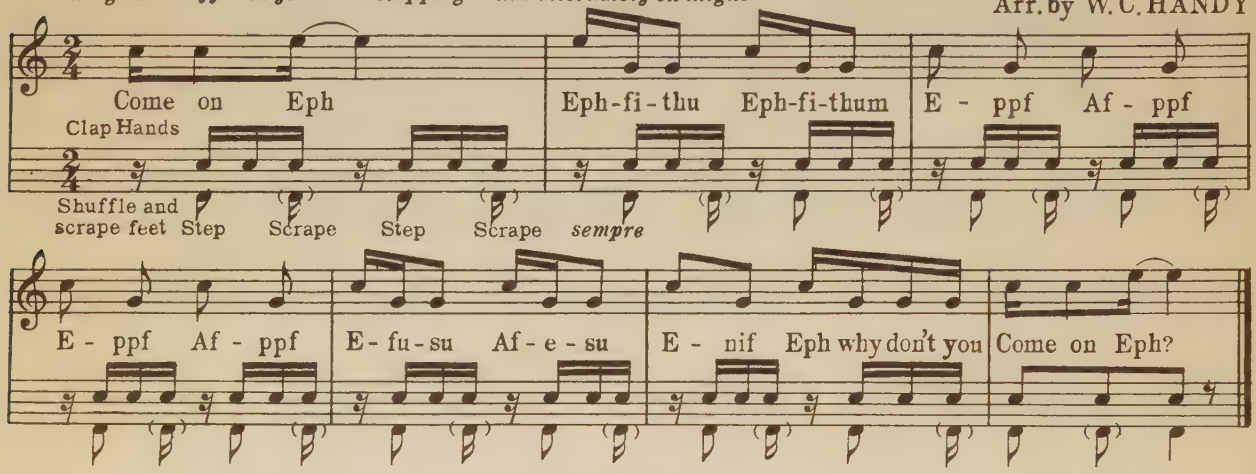
COME ON, EPH!

Sing and shuffle as you walk clapping hands alternately on thighs

Arr. by W. C. HANDY


Come on Eph Eph-fi-thu Eph-fi-thum E - ppf Af - ppf
Clap Hands
Shuffle and scrape feet Step Scrape Step Scrape sempre
E - ppf Af - ppf E - fu - su Af - e - su E - nif Eph why don't you Come on Eph?

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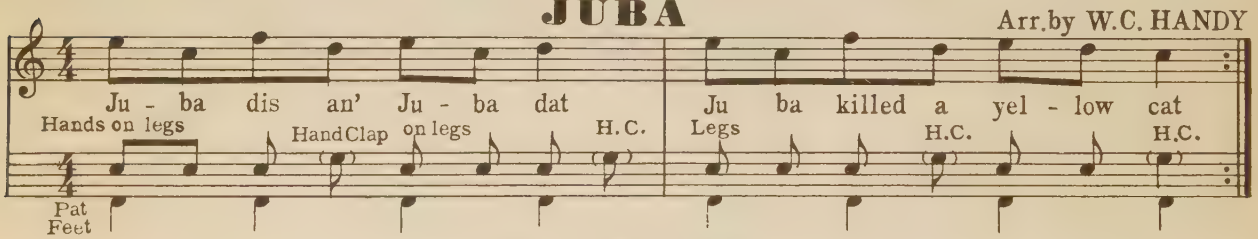
JUBA

Arr. by W. C. HANDY

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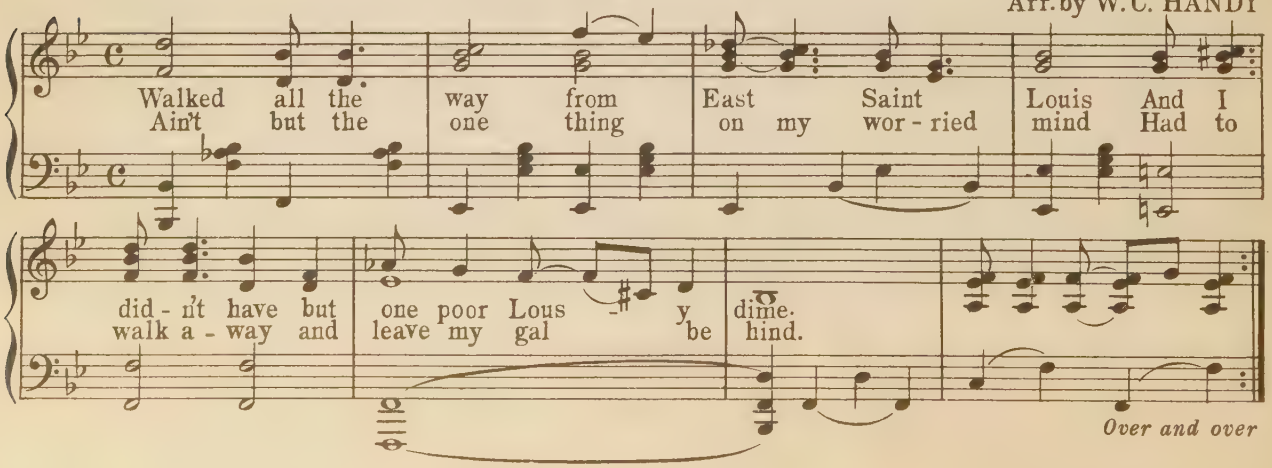
EAST ST. LOUIS

Arr. by W. C. HANDY

Walked all the way from East Saint Louis And I
Ain't but the one thing on my wor - ried mind Had to
did - n't have but one poor Lous - y dime.
walk a - way and leave my gal be hind.
Over and over

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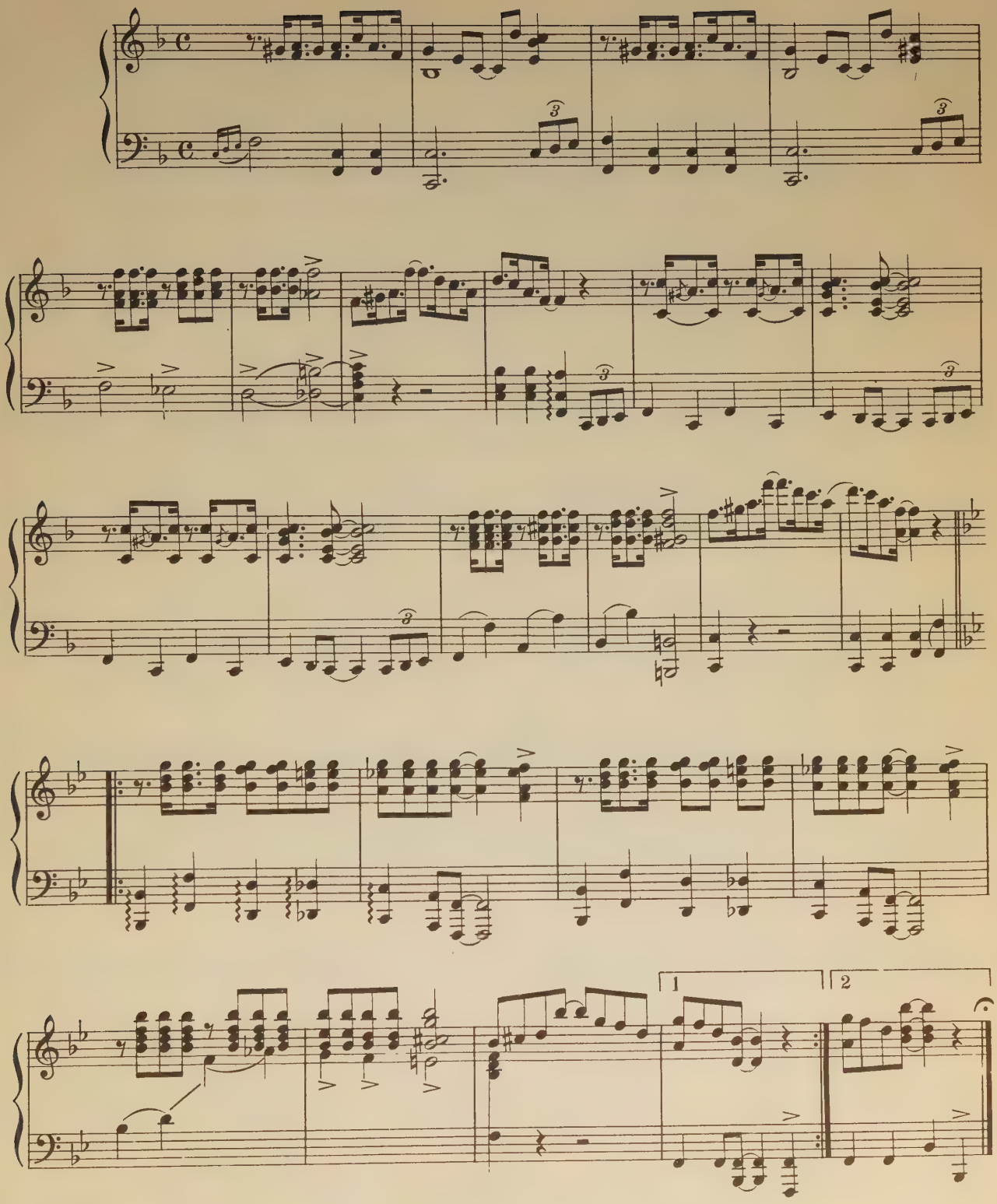
A TYPICAL STOMP

By W. C. HANDY



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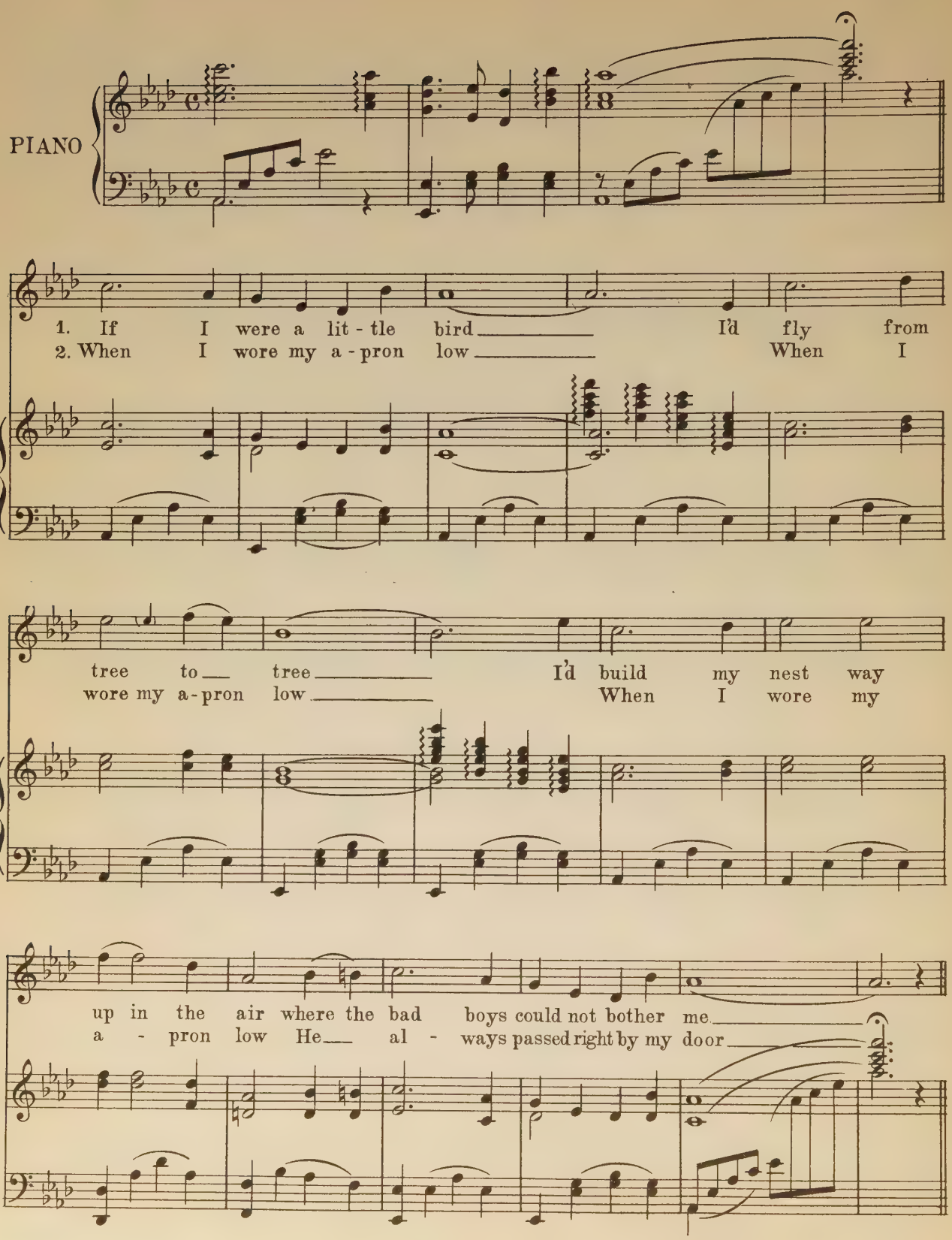
CARELESS LOVE

Arr. by
W. C. HANDY


PIANO
1. If I were a lit - tle bird I'd fly from
2. When I wore my a - pron low When I
tree to tree I'd build my nest way
wore my a-pron low When I wore my
up in the air where the bad boys could not bother me
a - pron low He al - ways passed right by my door

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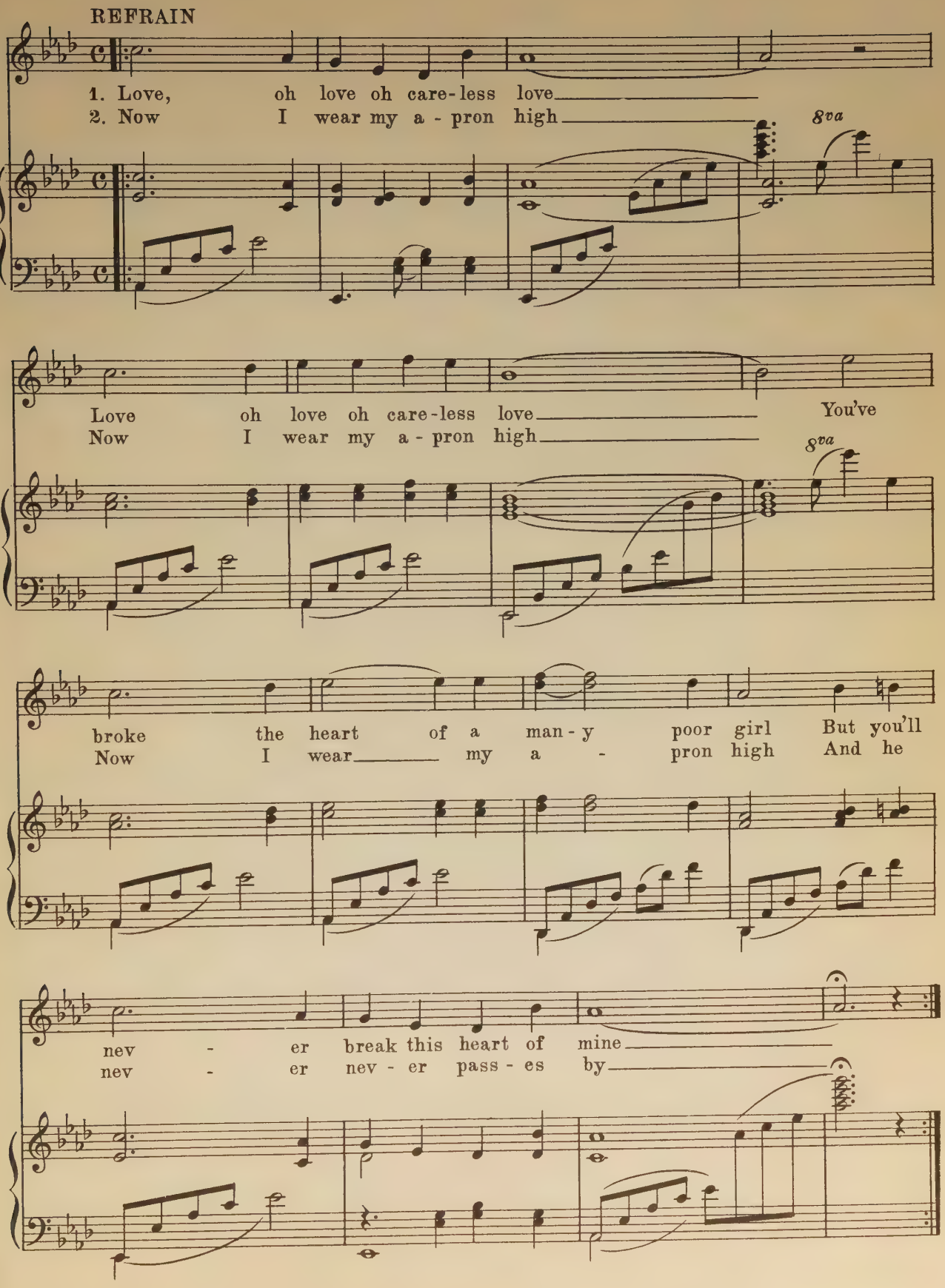

REFRAIN
1. Love, oh love oh care-less love
2. Now I wear my a - pron high
8va
Love oh love oh care-less love
Now I wear my a - pron high
You've
8va
broke the heart of a man - y poor girl But you'll
Now I wear my a - pron high And he
nev - er break this heart of mine
nev - er nev - er pass - es by

ADDITIONAL WORDS FOR CARELESS LOVE
by MARTHA E. KOENIG and SPENCER WILLIAMS

Love, oh love, oh careless love,
You fly to the head like wine
You've wrecked the life of many a poor gal
And you nearly spoiled this life of mine.

Love, oh love, oh careless love,
In your clutches of desire
You've made me break a many true vow
Then you set my very soul on fire.

Love, oh love, oh careless love,
All my happiness bereft
You've filled my heart with weary old blues
Now I'm walkin' talkin' to myself.

Love, oh love, oh careless love,
Trusted you now its too late
You've made me throw my only friend down
That is why I sing this hymn of hate.

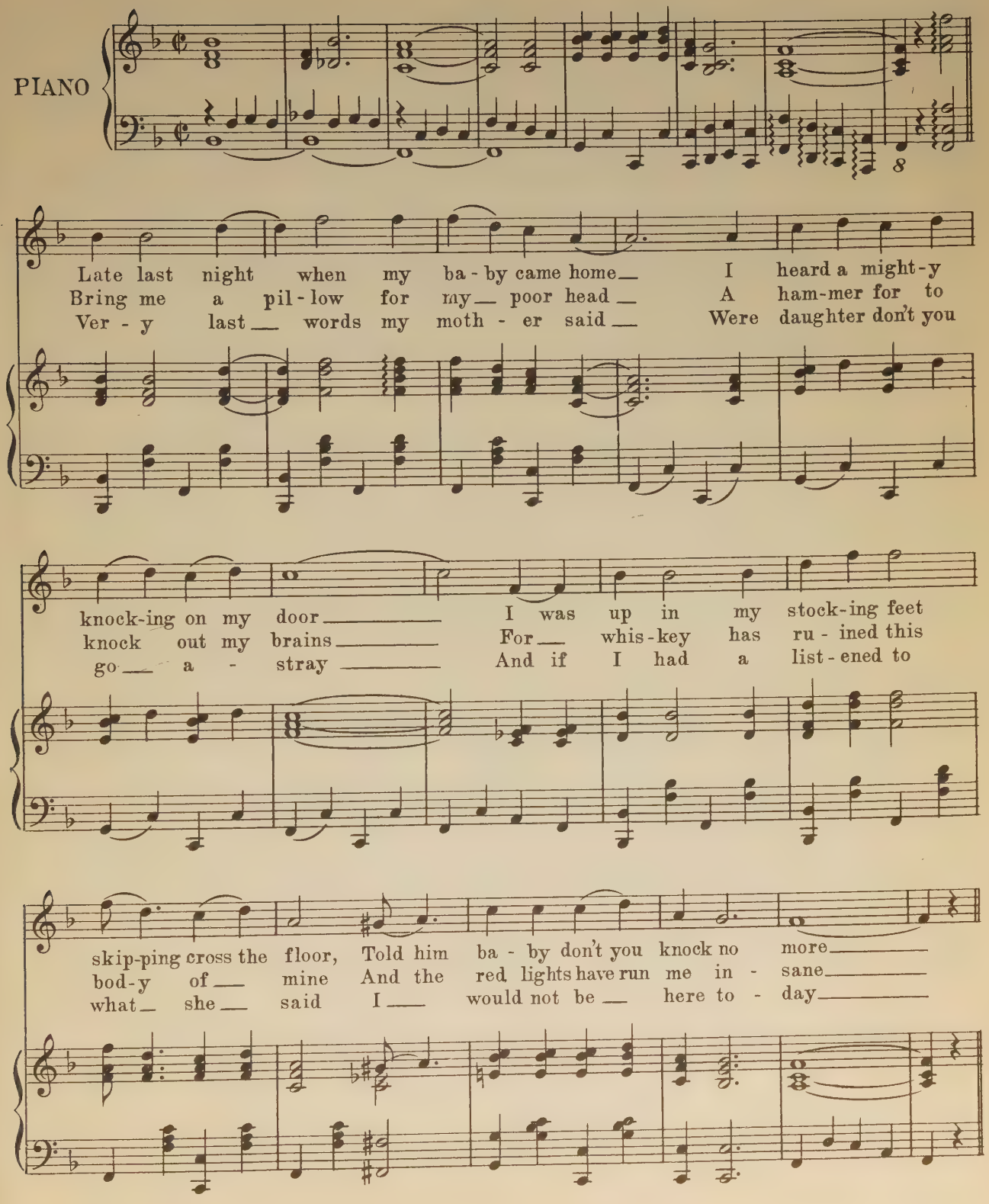
Love, oh love, oh careless love,
Night and day I weep and moan
You brought the wrong man into my life
For my sins till judgement I'll atone.

Love, oh love, oh careless love,
Here is all that I can say
Just like a Gypsy I'm roamin' 'round
And just can't keep the blues away.

Love, oh love, oh careless love,
Like a theif comes in the night
You came into this glad heart of mine
Then you put my happiness to flight.

EVER AFTER ON

Arr. by
W. C. HANDY


PIANO
Late last night when my ba - by came home I heard a might - y
Bring me a pil - low for my poor head A ham-mer for to
Ver - y last words my moth - er said Were daughter don't you
knock-ing on my door I was up in my stock-ing feet
knock out my brains For whis-key has ru - ined this
go a - stray And if I had a list - ened to
skip-ping cross the floor, Told him ba - by don't you knock no more
bod-y of mine And the red lights have run me in - sane
what she said I would not be here to - day

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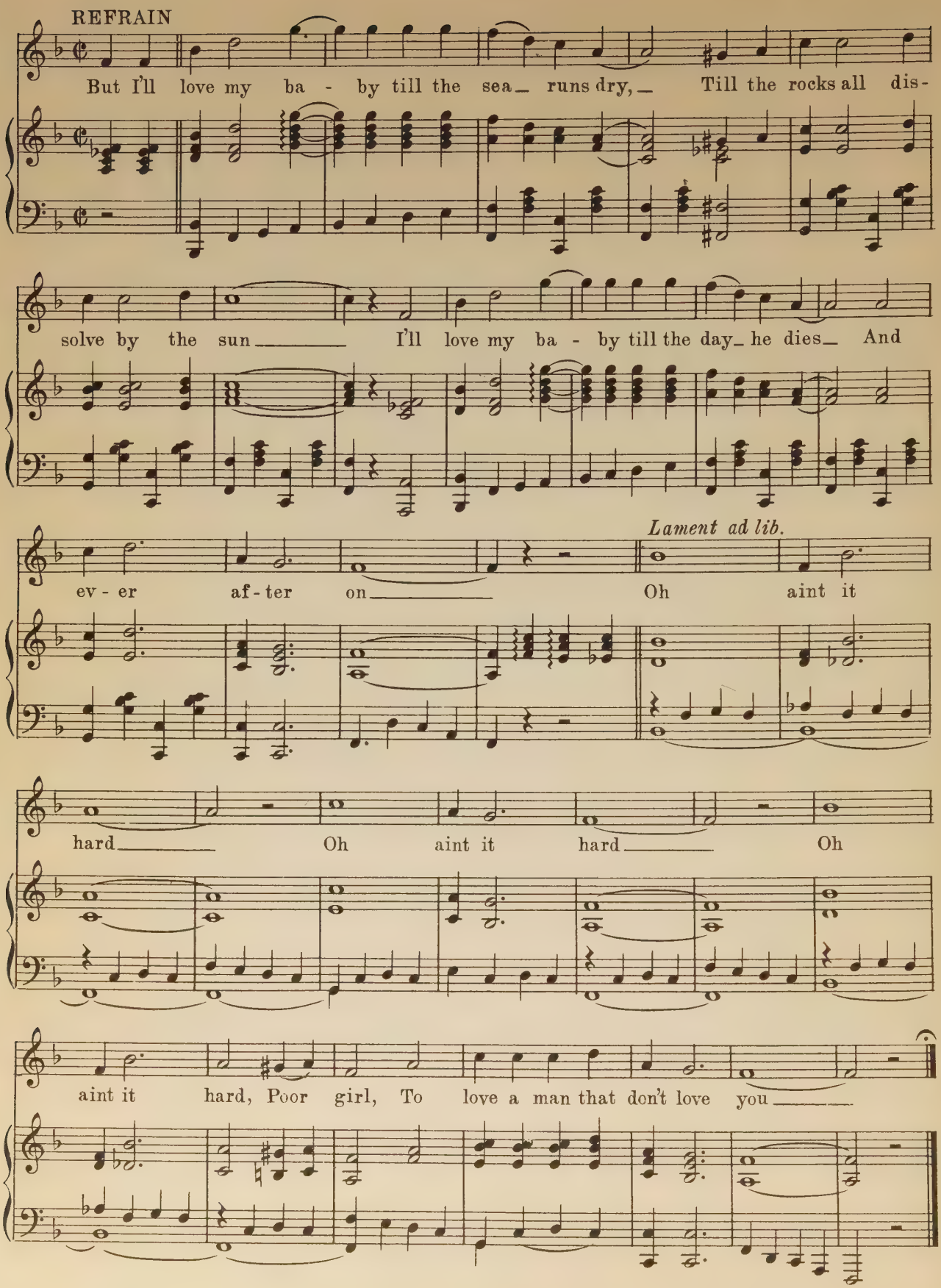
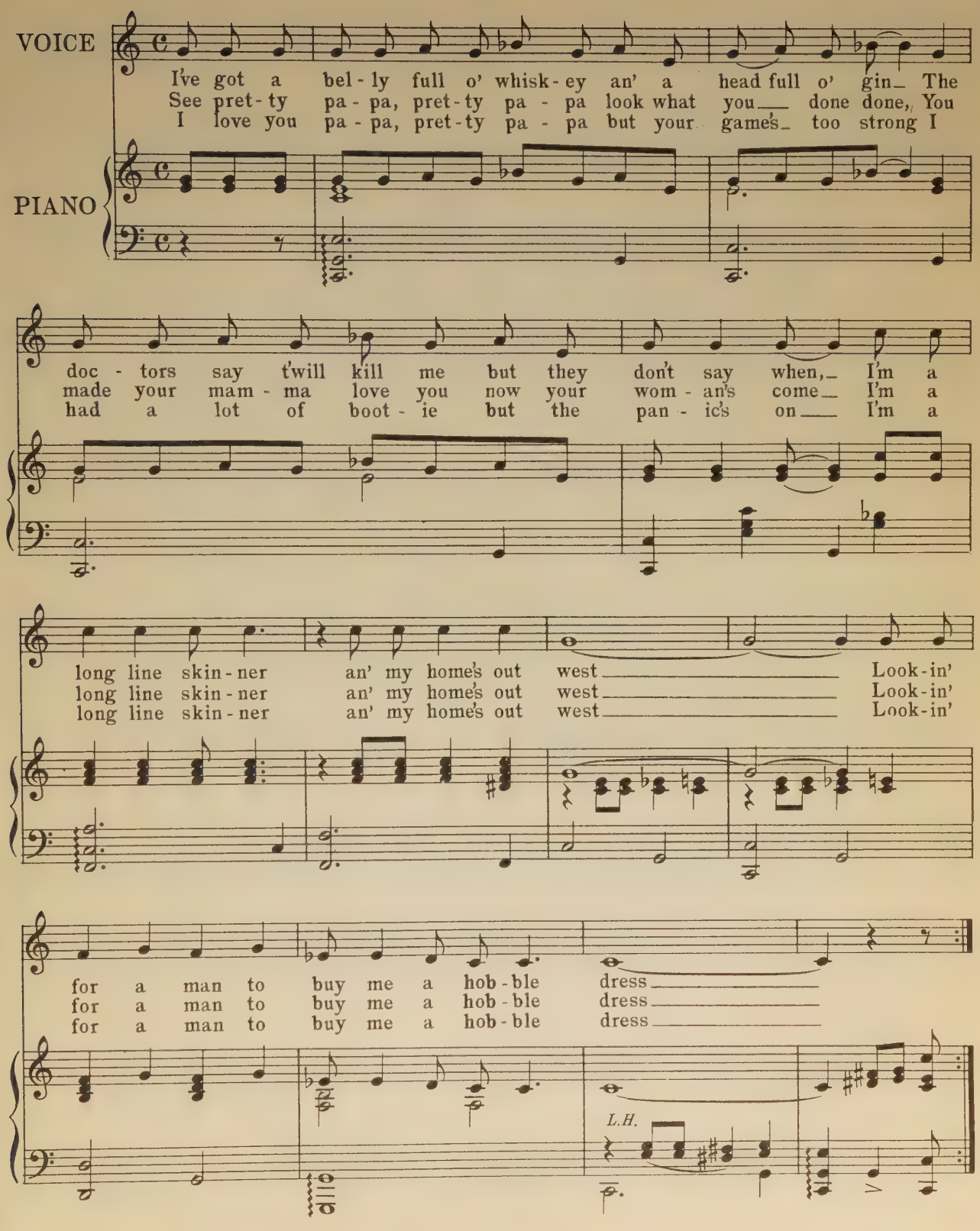

REFRAIN
But I'll love my ba - by till the sea_ runs dry,_ Till the rocks all dis-
solve by the sun_____ I'll love my ba - by till the day_ he dies_ And
ev - er af - ter on_____
Lament ad lib.
Oh aint it
hard_____ Oh aint it hard_____ Oh
aint it hard, Poor girl, To love a man that don't love you_____

VESTA AND MATTIE'S BLUES

Arr. by W. C. HANDY

VOICE
PIANO
I've got a bel-ly full o' whisk-ey an' a head full o' gin_ The
See pret-ty pa-pa, pret-ty pa-pa look what you__ done done, You
I love you pa-pa, pret-ty pa-pa but your game's_ too strong I
doc-tors say t'will kill me but they don't say when,_ I'm a
made your mam-ma love you now your wom-an's come__ I'm a
had a lot of boot-ie but the pan-ic's on__ I'm a
long line skin-ner an' my home's out west__ Look-in'
long line skin-ner an' my home's out west__ Look-in'
long line skin-ner an' my home's out west__ Look-in'
for a man to buy me a hob-ble dress__
for a man to buy me a hob-ble dress__
for a man to buy me a hob-ble dress__
L.H.

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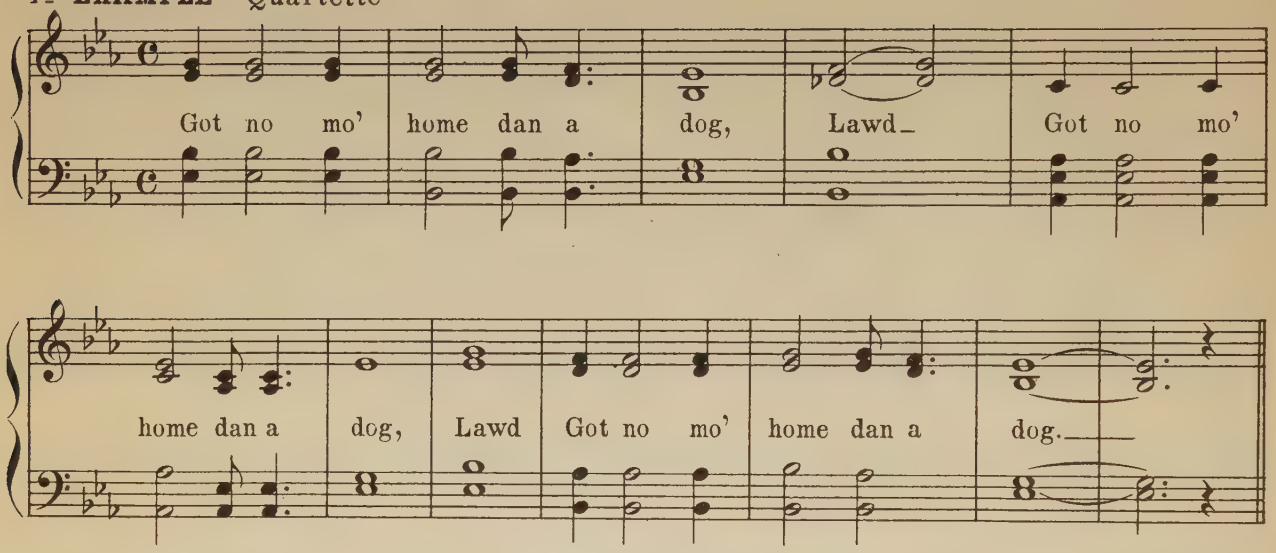
GOT NO MO' HOME DAN A DOG

W. C. Handy

1st EXAMPLE Quartette

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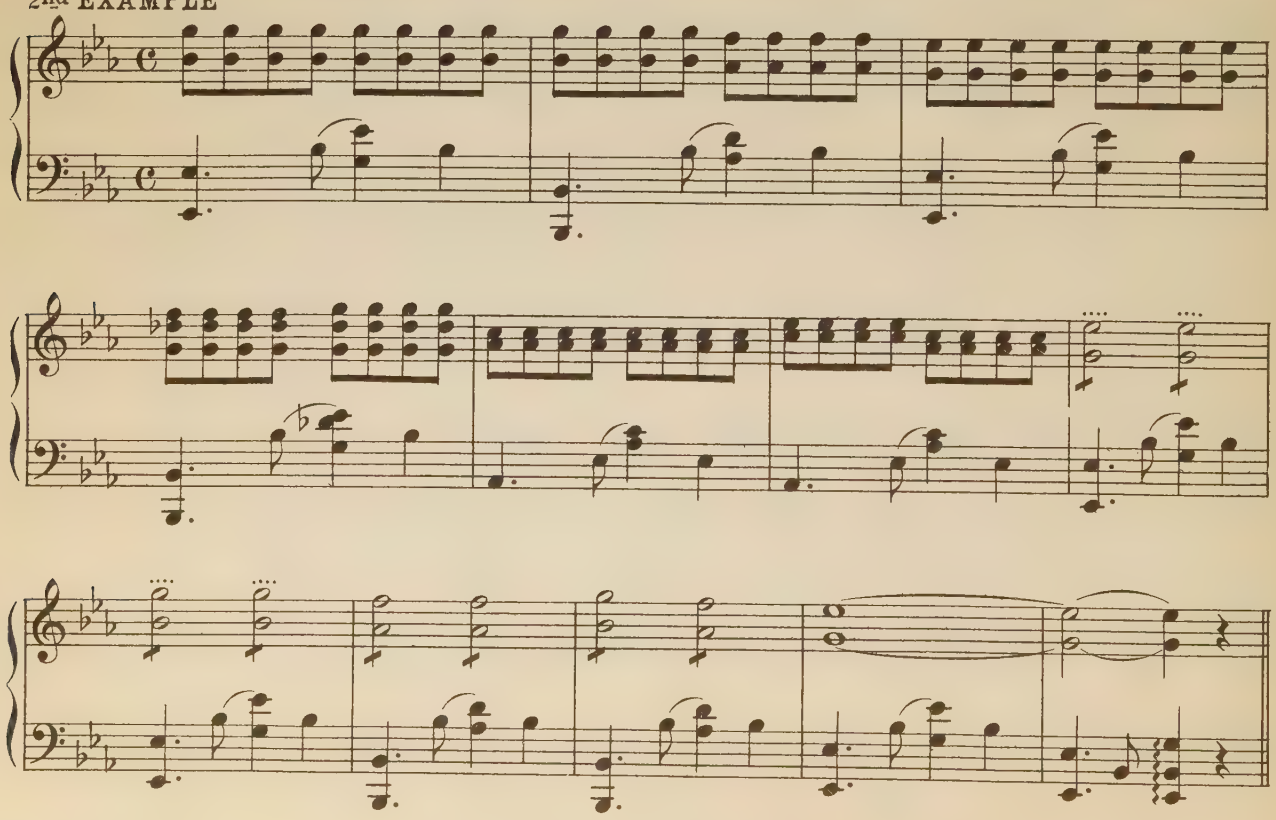

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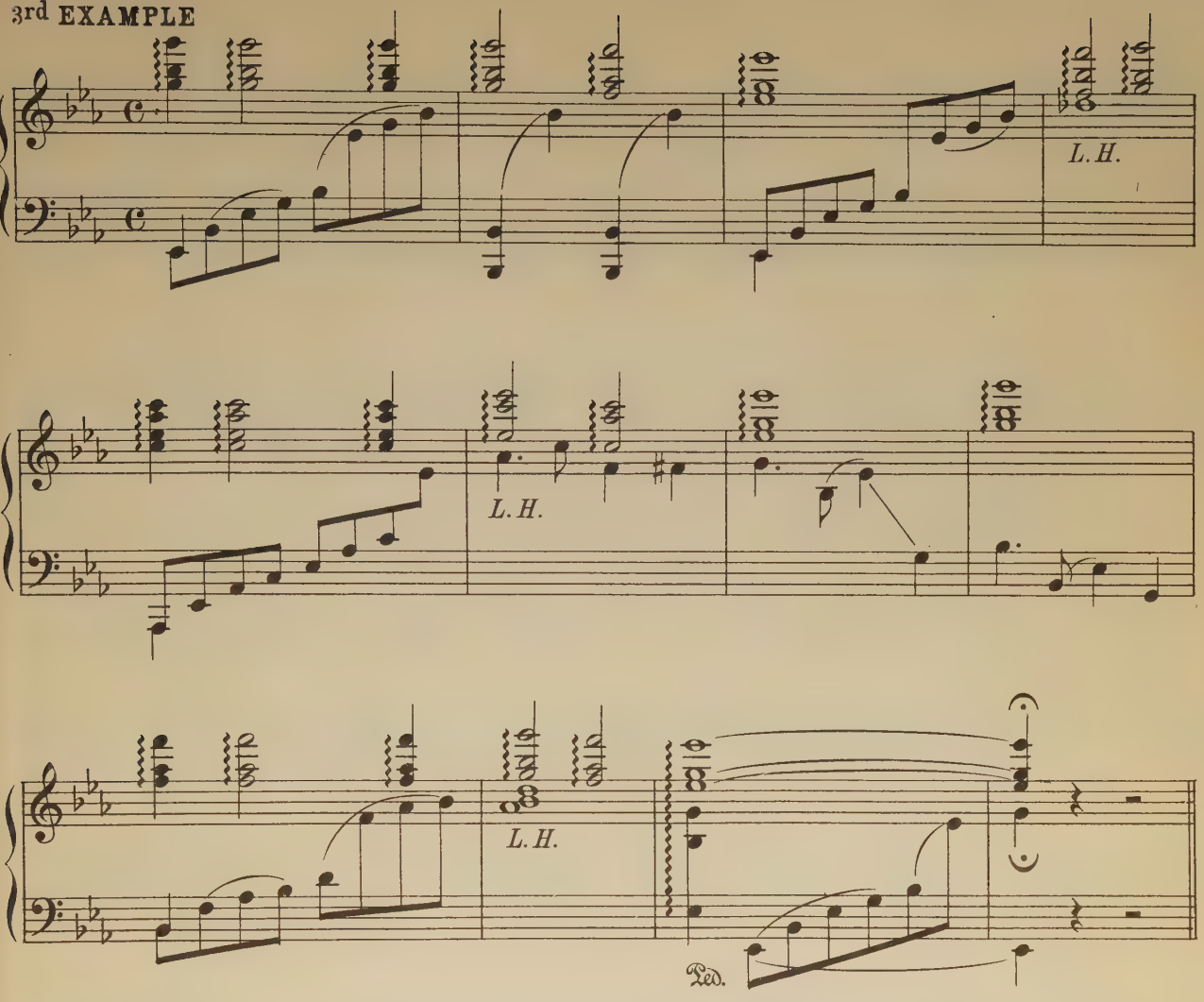
3rd EXAMPLE



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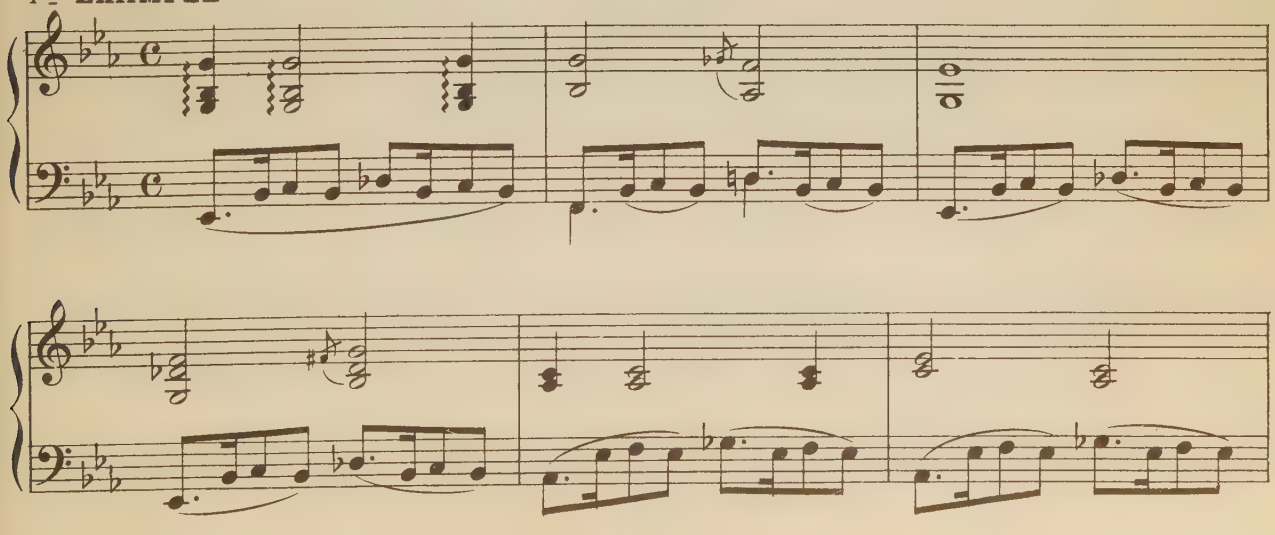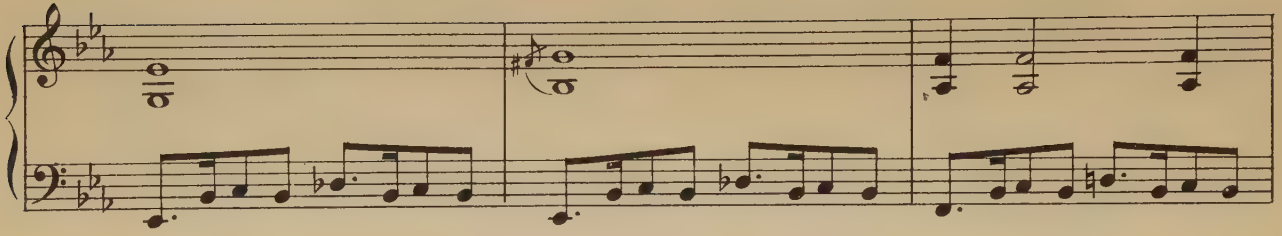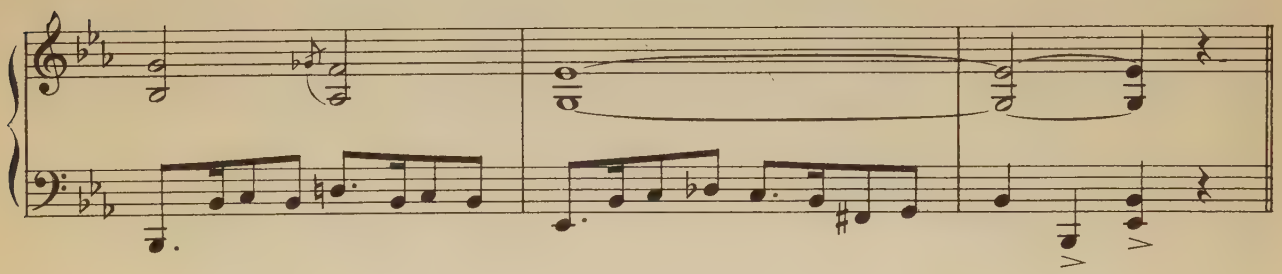

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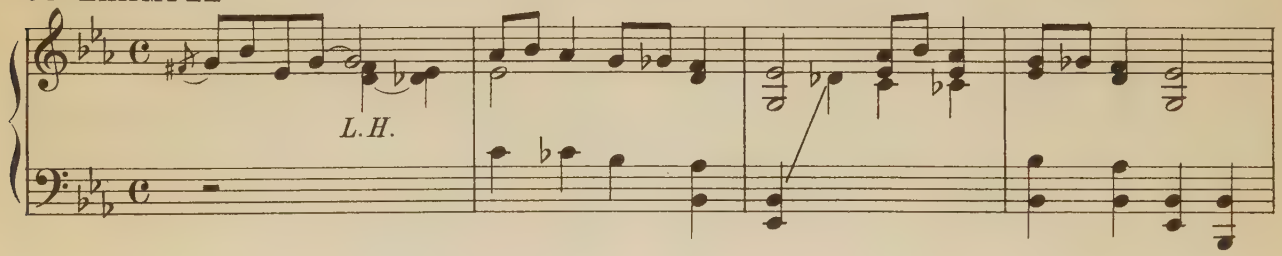
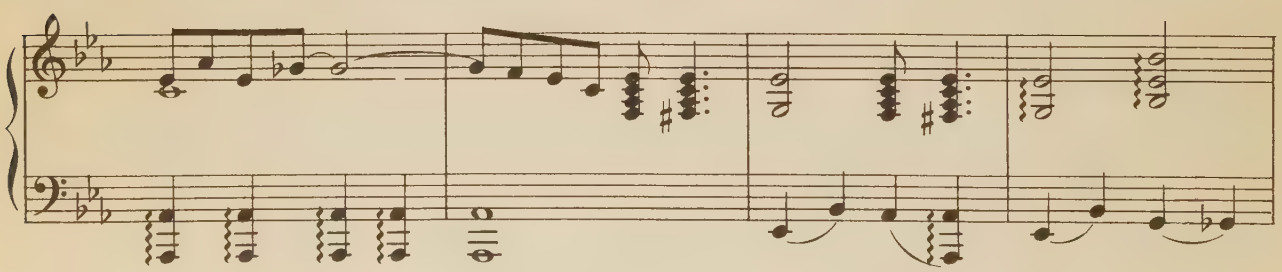
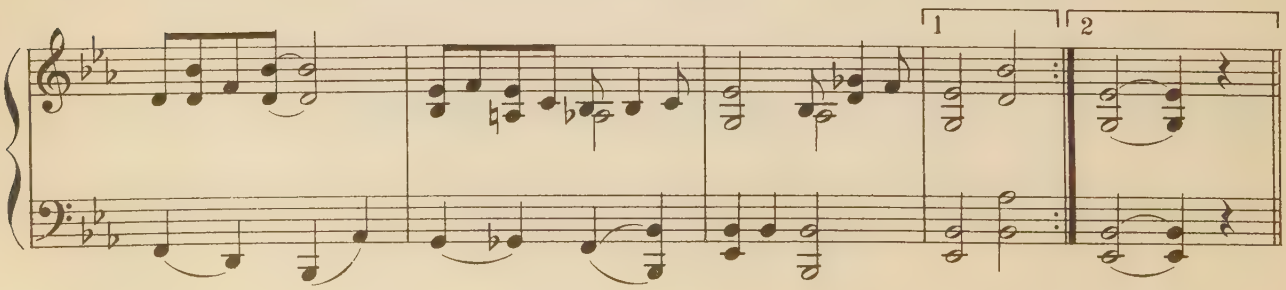
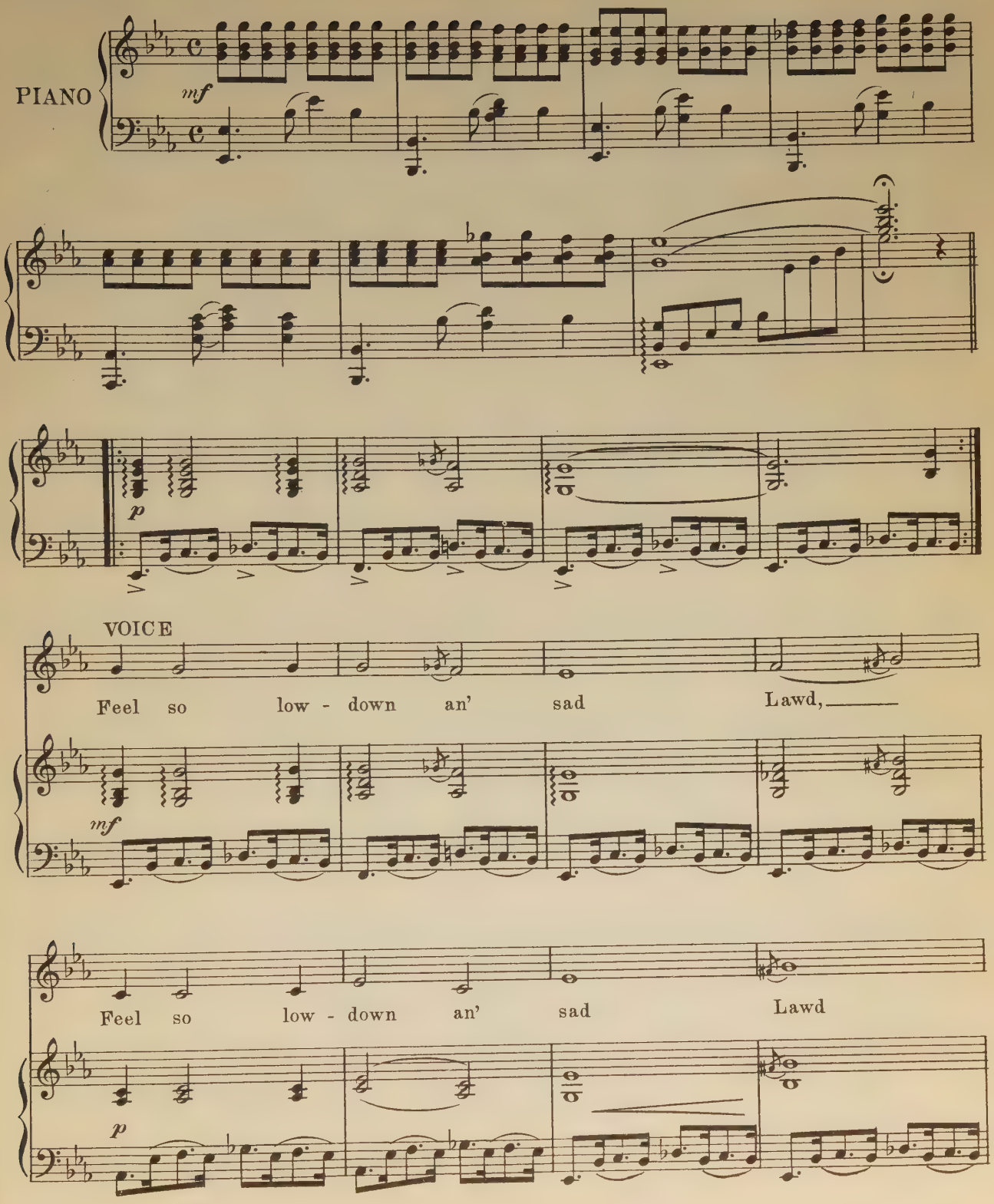




FRIENDLESS BLUES

Words by
MERCEDES GILBERT

Music by
W. C. HANDY



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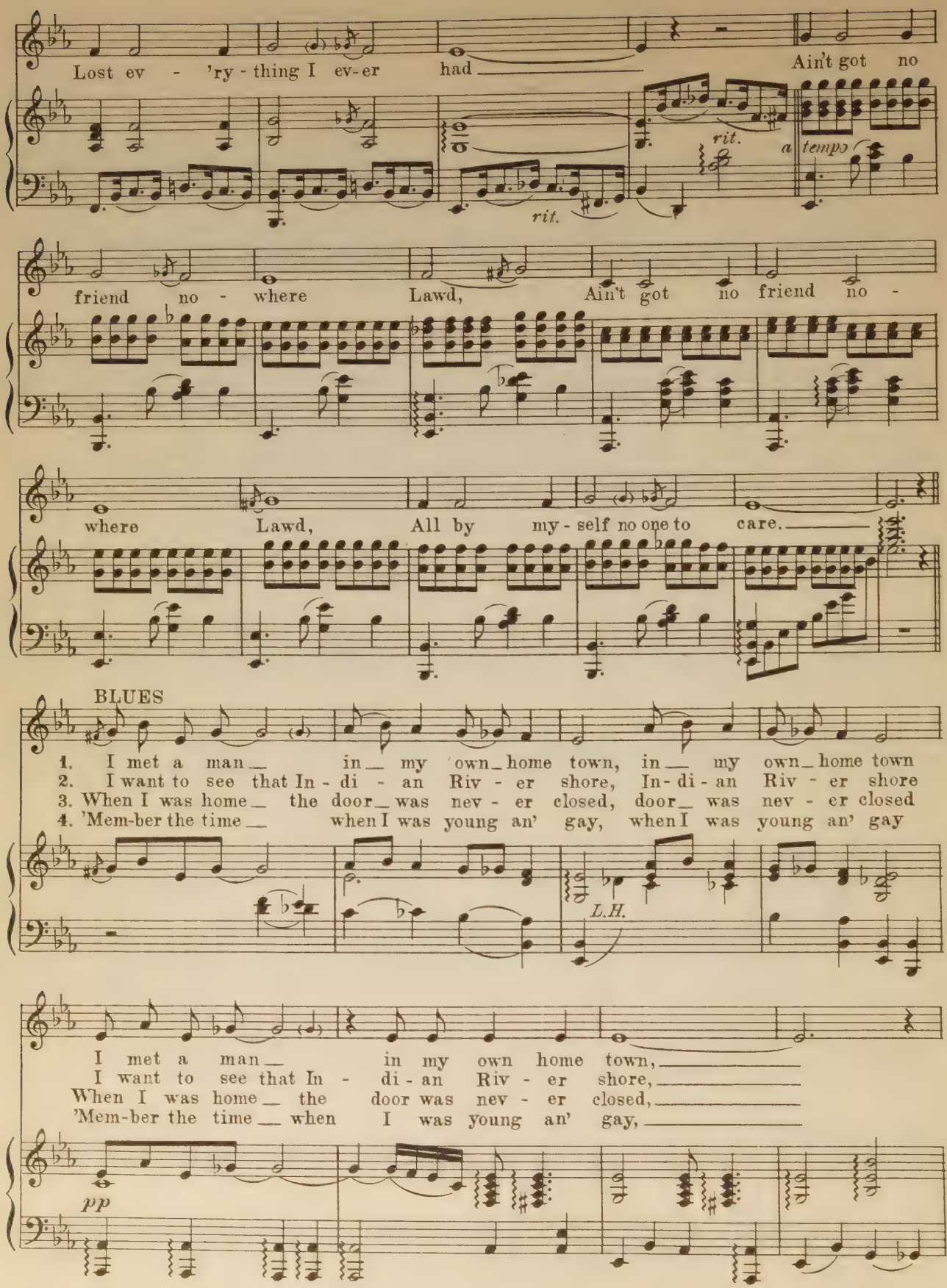
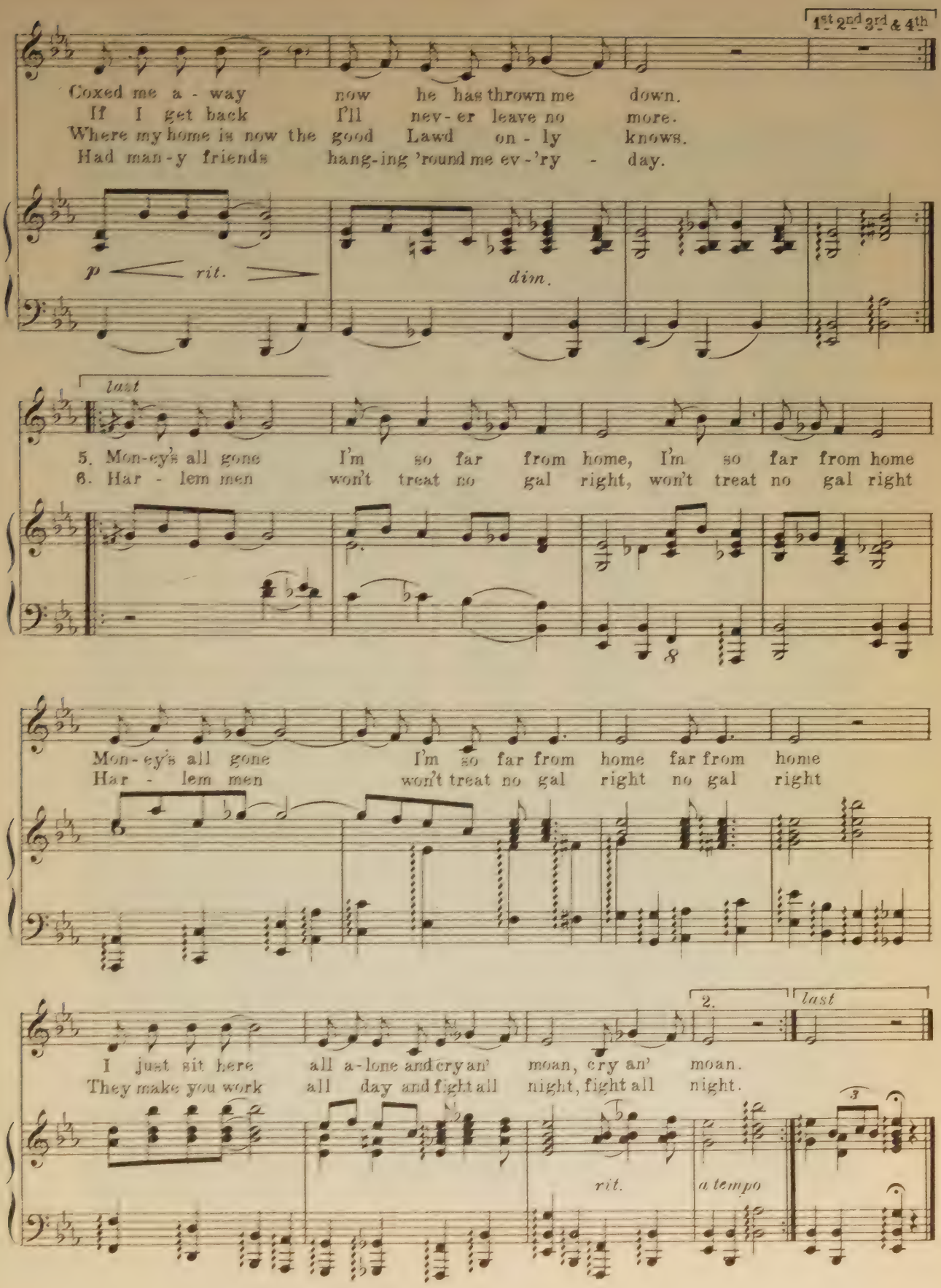

Lost ev - 'ry - thing I ev-er had
Ain't got no
rit.
a tempo
rit.
friend no - where Lawd, Ain't got no friend no -
where Lawd, All by my - self no one to care.
BLUES
1. I met a man in my own home town, in my own home town
2. I want to see that In - di - an Riv - er shore, In - di - an Riv - er shore
3. When I was home the door was nev - er closed, door was nev - er closed
4. 'Mem-ber the time when I was young an' gay, when I was young an' gay
L.H.
I met a man in my own home town,
I want to see that In - di - an Riv - er shore,
When I was home the door was nev - er closed,
'Mem-ber the time when I was young an' gay,
pp


1st 2nd 3rd & 4th
Coxed me a - way now he has thrown me down.
If I get back I'll nev - er leave no more.
Where my home is now the good Lawd on - ly knows.
Had man - y friends hang - ing 'round me ev - 'ry - day.
p
rit.
dim.
last
5. Mon - ey's all gone I'm so far from home, I'm so far from home
6. Har - lem men won't treat no gal right, won't treat no gal right
8
Mon - ey's all gone I'm so far from home far from home
Har - lem men won't treat no gal right no gal right
2.
last
I just sit here all a - lone and cry an' moan, cry an' moan.
They make you work all day and fight all night, fight all night.
3
rit.
a tempo

THE MEMPHIS BLUES

Better Known as

"MISTER CRUMP"

As played by

"HANDY AND HIS BAND"

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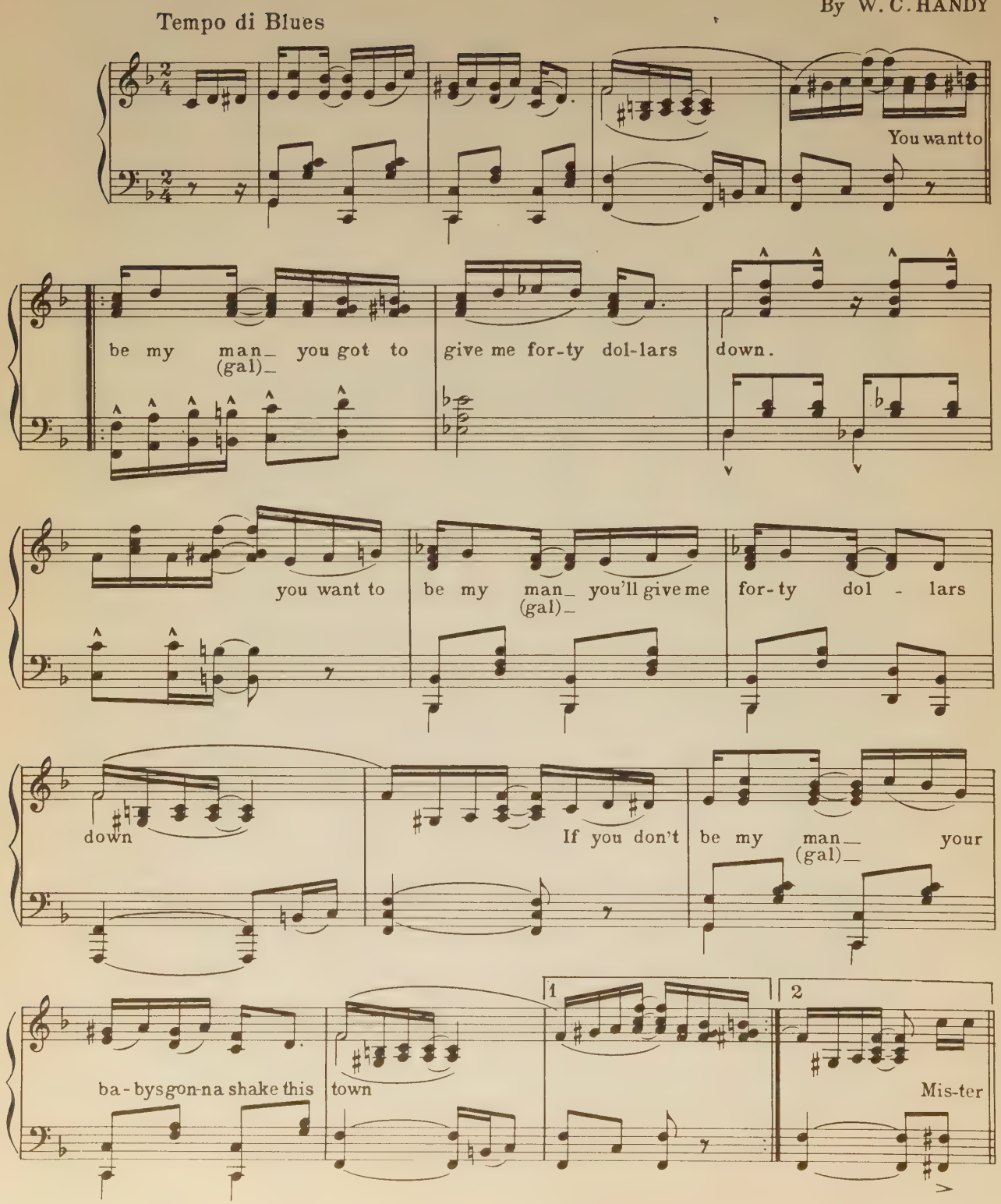
MEMPHIS, TENN.

THE BLUES

THE MEMPHIS BLUES

By W. C. HANDY



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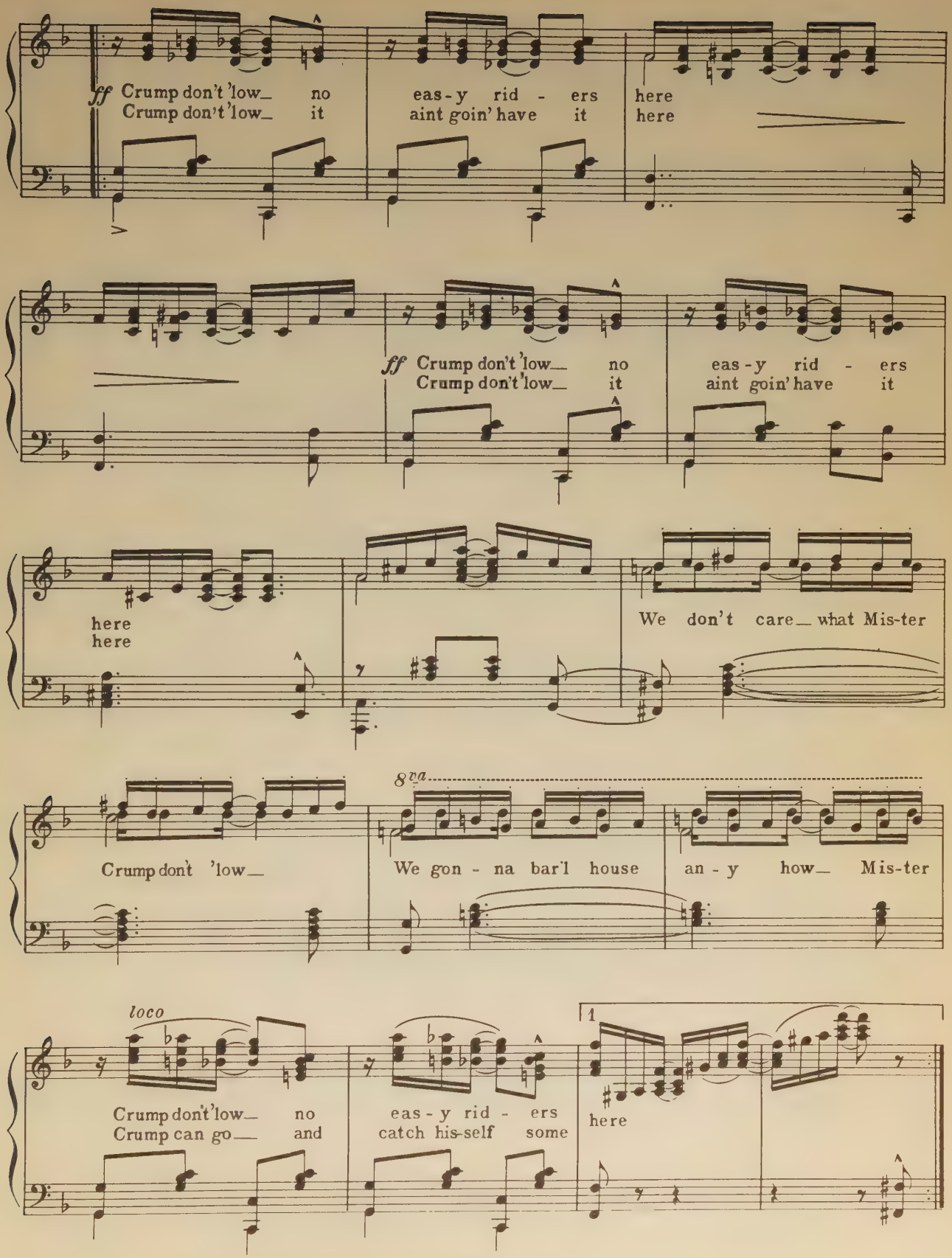
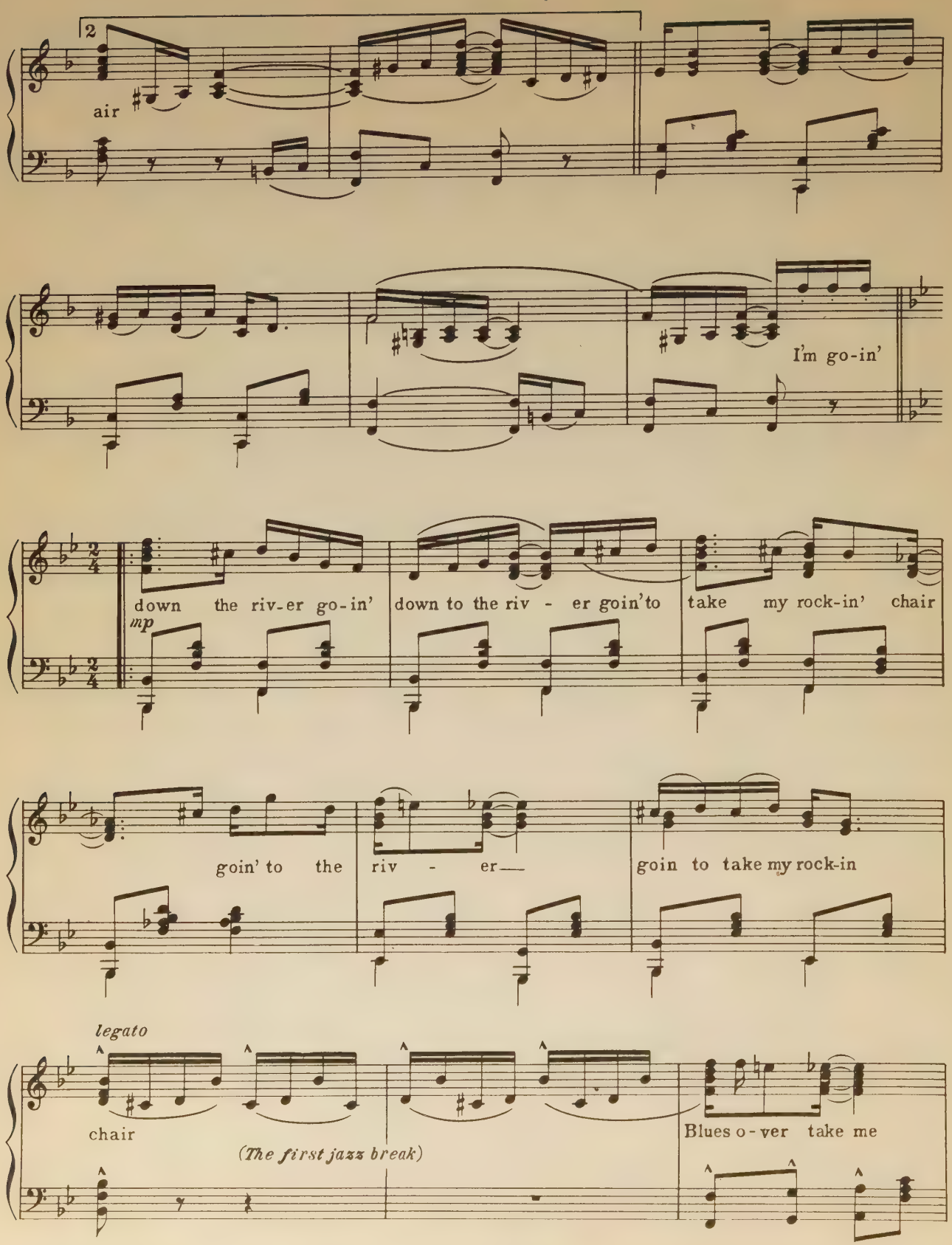
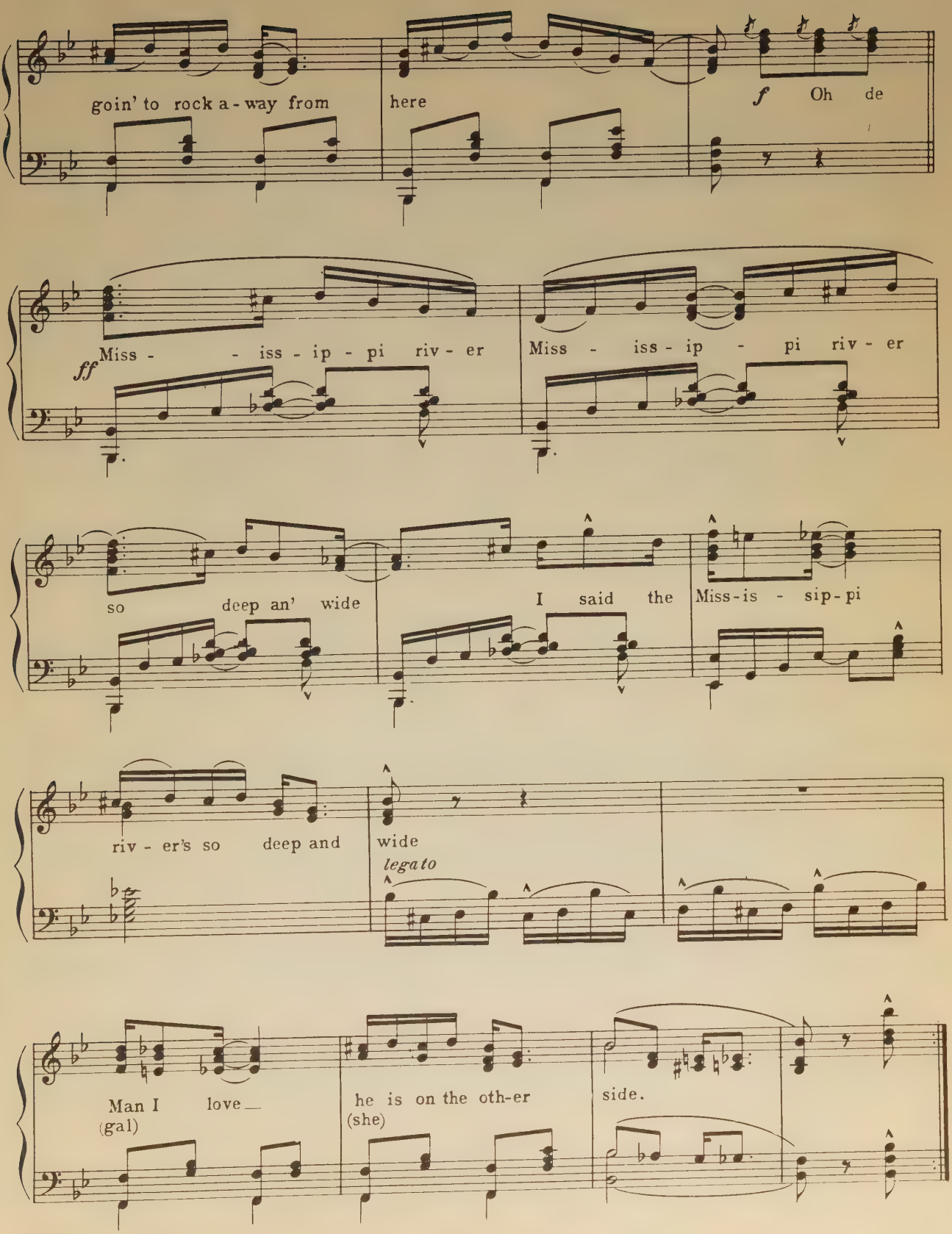

ff Crump don't 'low_ no
Crump don't 'low_ it
eas-y rid - ers
aint goin' have it
here
here
ff Crump don't 'low_ no
Crump don't 'low_ it
eas-y rid - ers
aint goin' have it
here
here
We don't care_ what Mis-ter
8va
Crump don't 'low_
We gon - na bar'l house
an - y how_ Mis-ter
loco
Crump don't 'low_ no
Crump can go_ and
eas-y rid - ers
catch his-self some
1
here

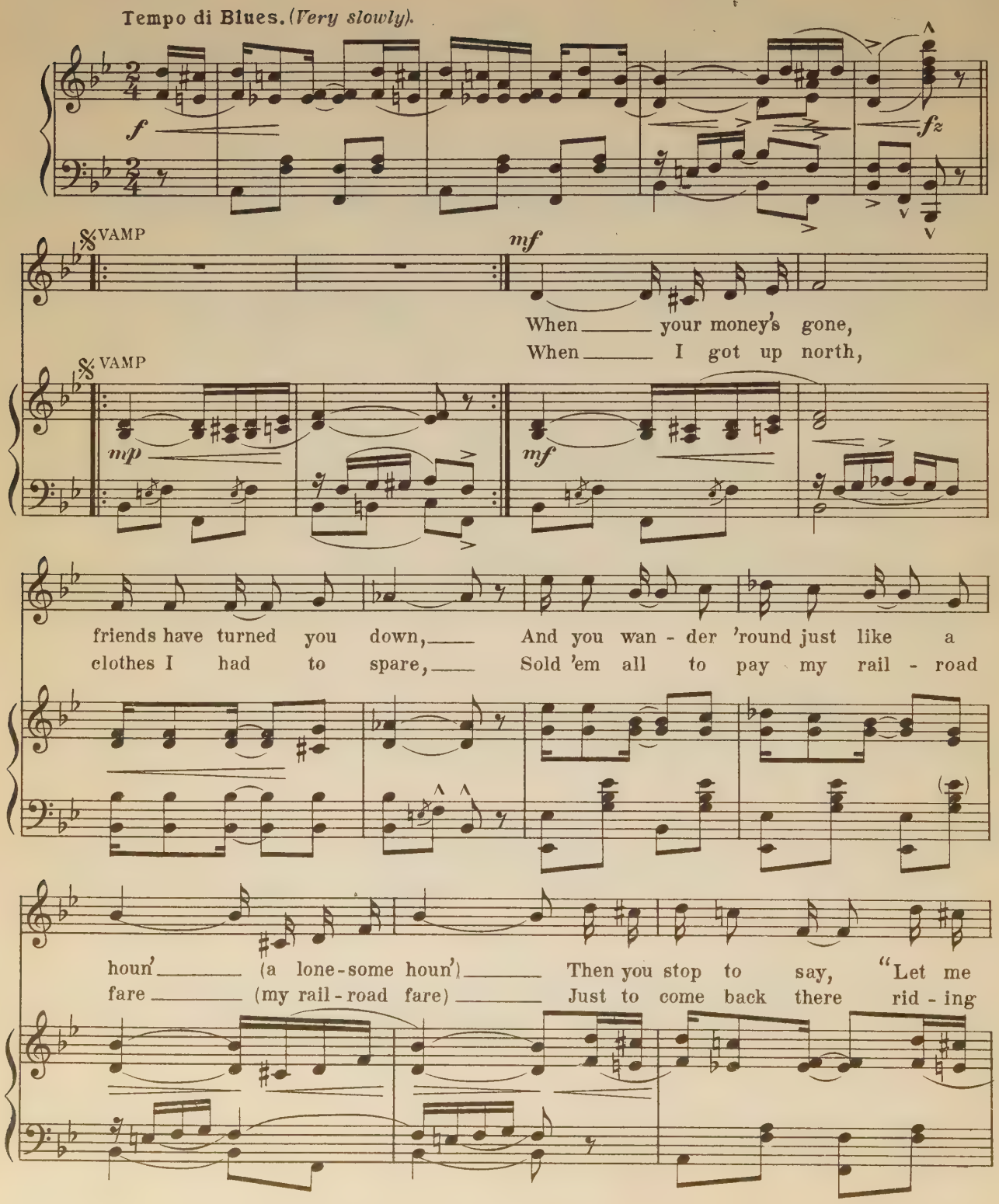

2
air
I'm go-in'
down the riv-er go-in' down to the riv - er goin'to take my rock-in' chair
mp
goin' to the riv - er—
goin to take my rock-in
legato
chair
(The first jazz break)
Blues o-ver take me


goin' to rock a-way from here
f Oh de
ff Miss - - iss - ip - pi riv - er
Miss - iss - ip - pi riv - er
so deep an' wide
I said the
Miss-is - sip-pi
riv - er's so deep and
wide
legato
Man I love
(gal)
he is on the oth-er
(she)
side.

DALLAS BLUES

Words by
LLOYD GARRETT.

Music by
HART A. WAND.


Tempo di Blues. (Very slowly).
f
fz
VAMP
mf
When your money's gone,
When I got up north,
VAMP
mp
mf
friends have turned you down, And you wan - der 'round just like a
clothes I had to spare, Sold 'em all to pay my rail - road
houn' (a lone-some houn') Then you stop to say, "Let me
fare (my rail-road fare) Just to come back there rid - ing

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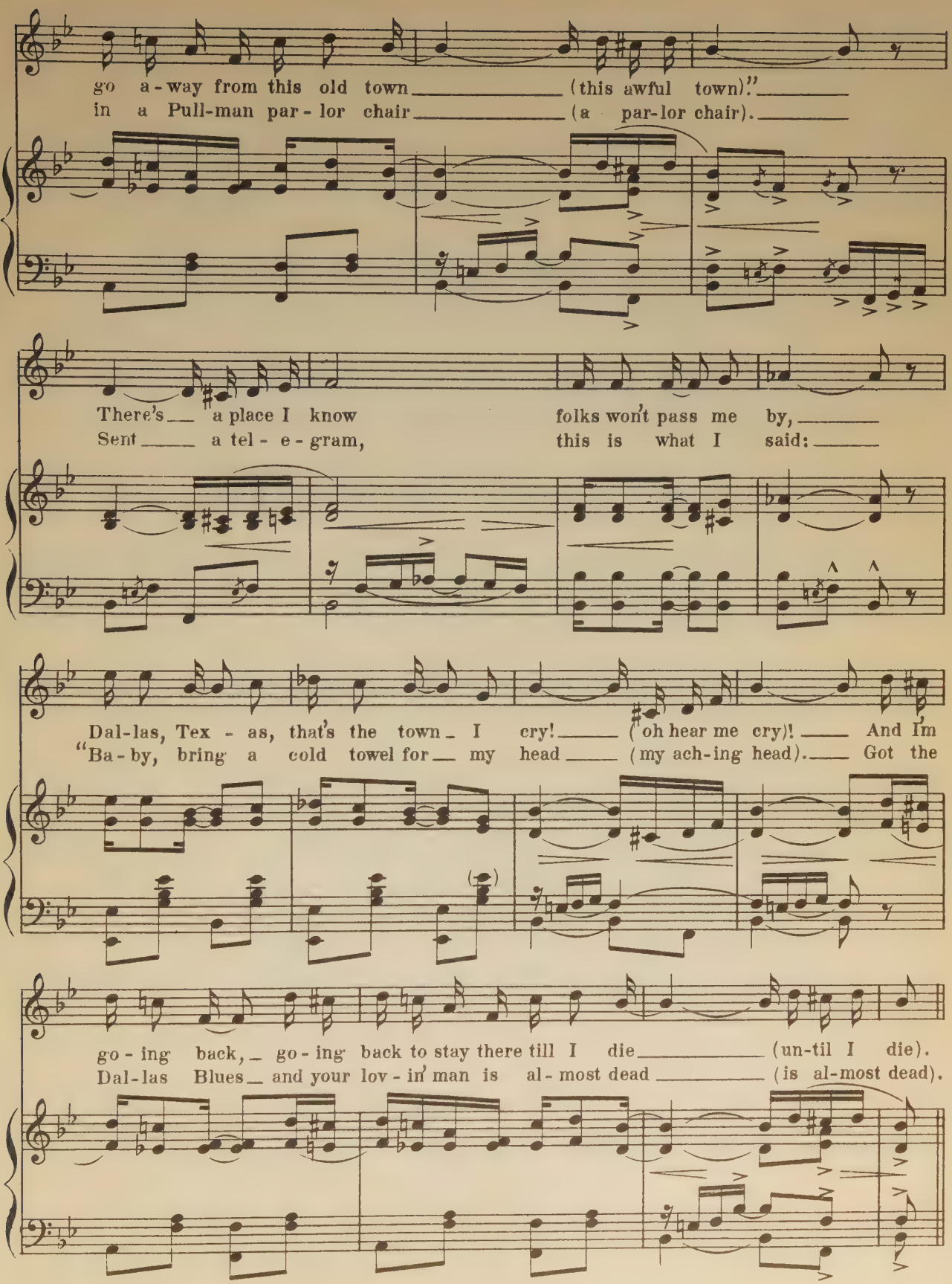
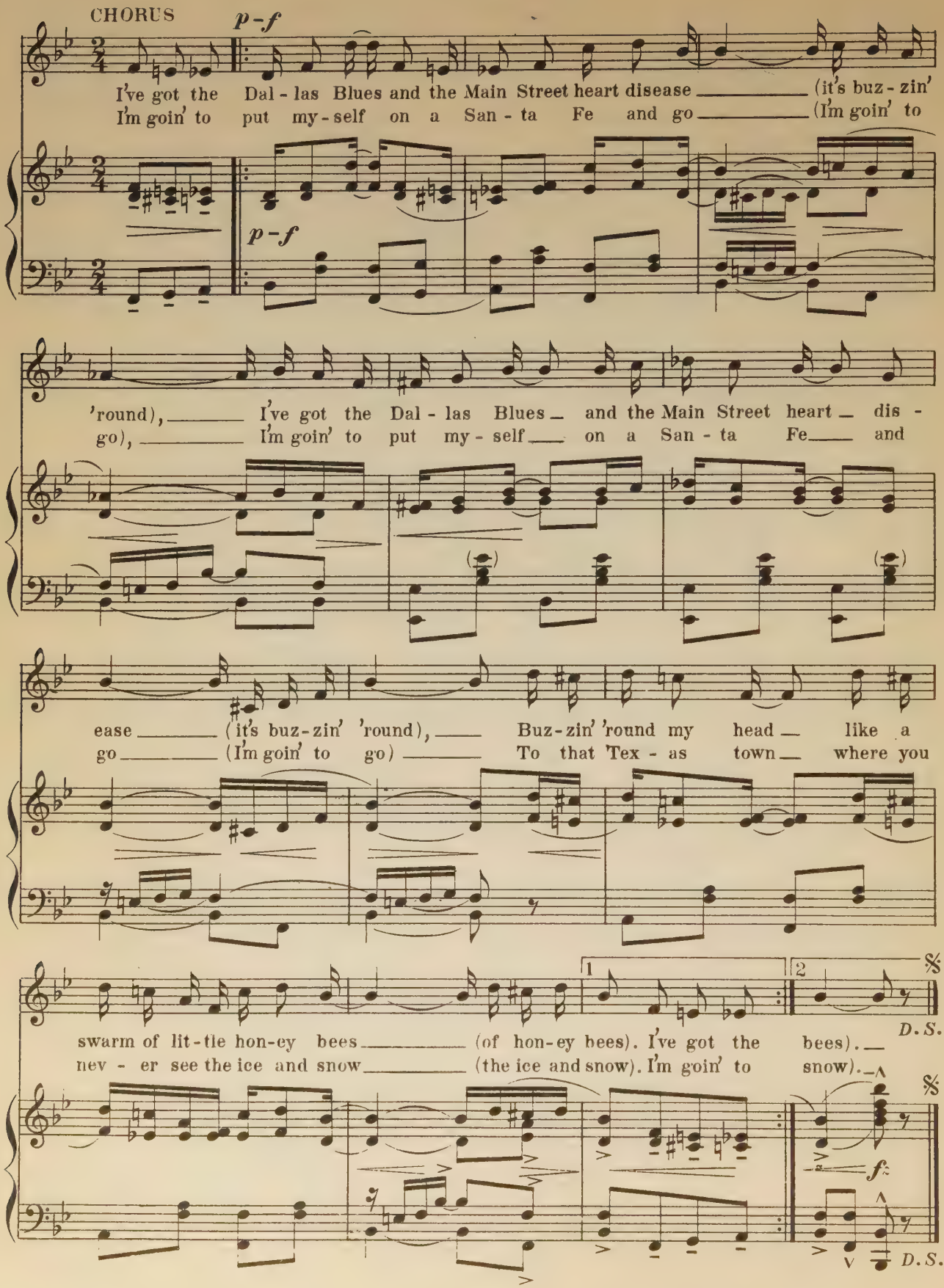
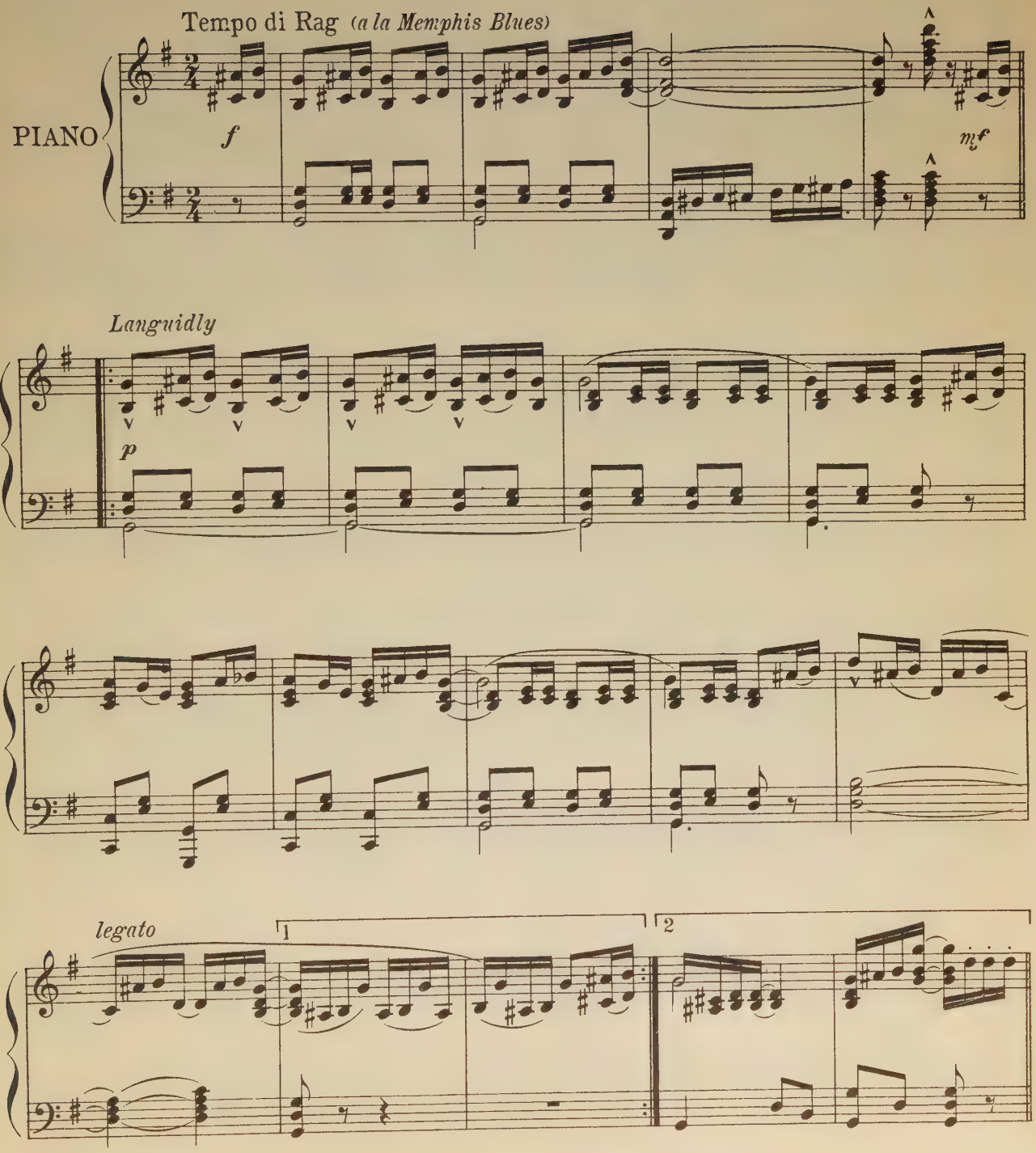

go a-way from this old town (this awful town)."
in a Pull-man par-lor chair (a par-lor chair).
There's a place I know folks won't pass me by,
Sent a tel-e-gram, this is what I said:
Dal-las, Tex-as, that's the town I cry! (oh hear me cry)! And I'm
"Ba-by, bring a cold towel for my head (my ach-ing head). Got the
go-ing back, go-ing back to stay there till I die (un-til I die).
Dal-las Blues and your lov-in' man is al-most dead (is al-most dead).


CHORUS
p-f
I've got the Dal - las Blues and the Main Street heart disease (it's buz - zin'
I'm goin' to put my - self on a San - ta Fe and go (I'm goin' to
p-f
'round), I've got the Dal - las Blues and the Main Street heart dis -
go), I'm goin' to put my - self on a San - ta Fe and
ease (it's buz - zin' 'round), Buz - zin' 'round my head like a
go (I'm goin' to go) To that Tex - as town where you
1
2
D.S.
swarm of lit - tle hon - ey bees (of hon - ey bees). I've got the bees).
nev - er see the ice and snow (the ice and snow). I'm goin' to snow).
f
D.S.

THE JOGO BLUES

W. C. HANDY



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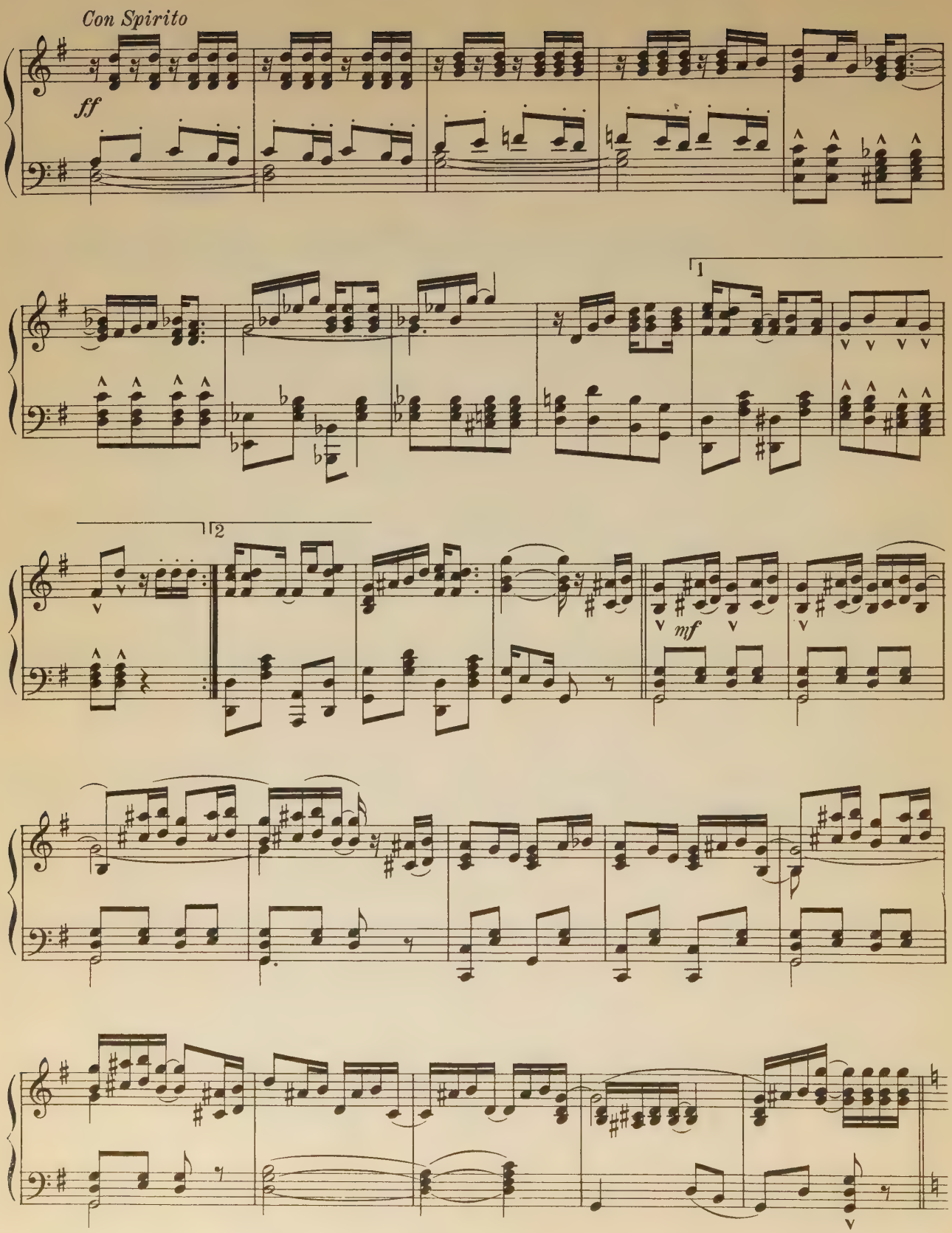
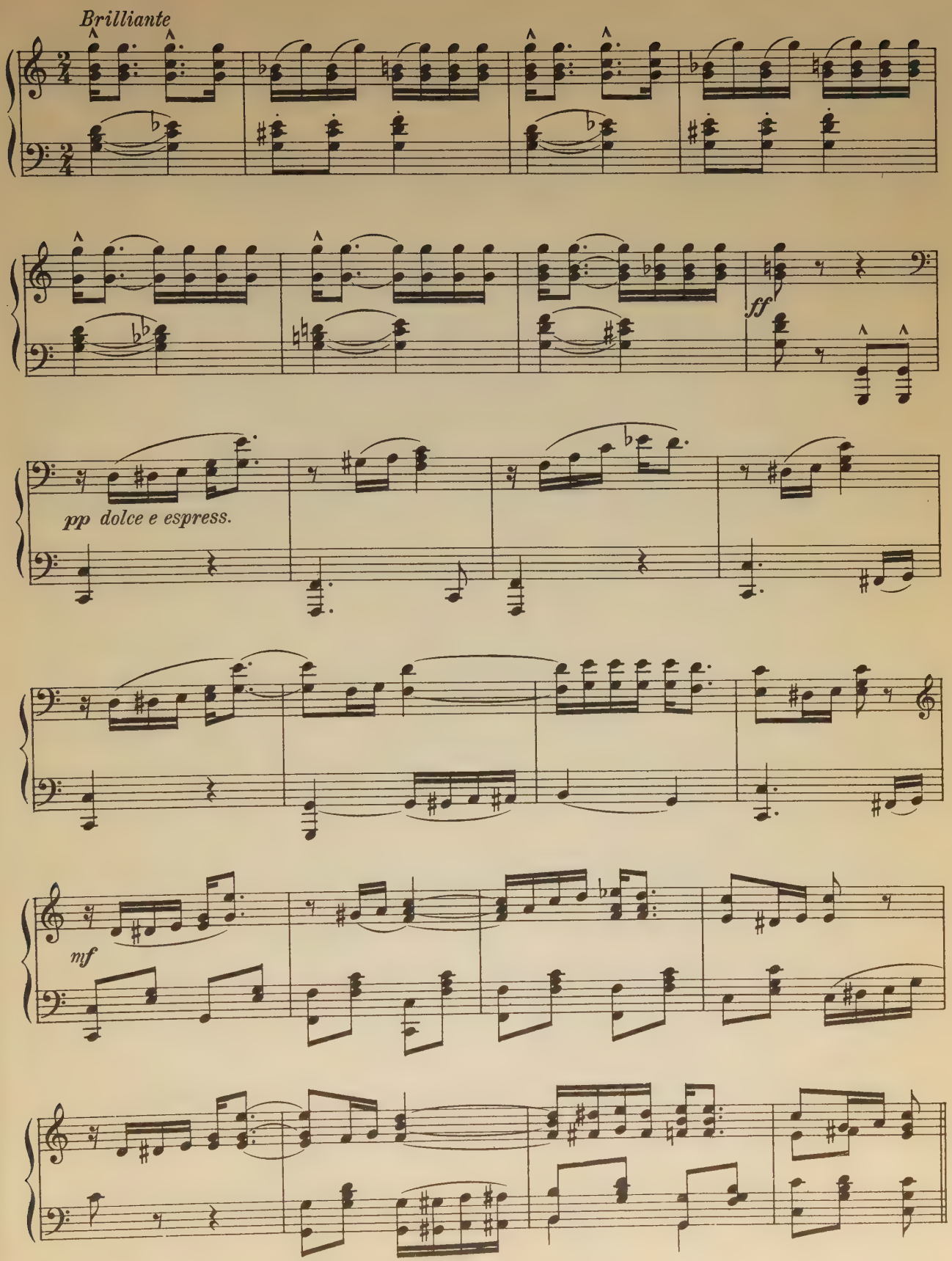
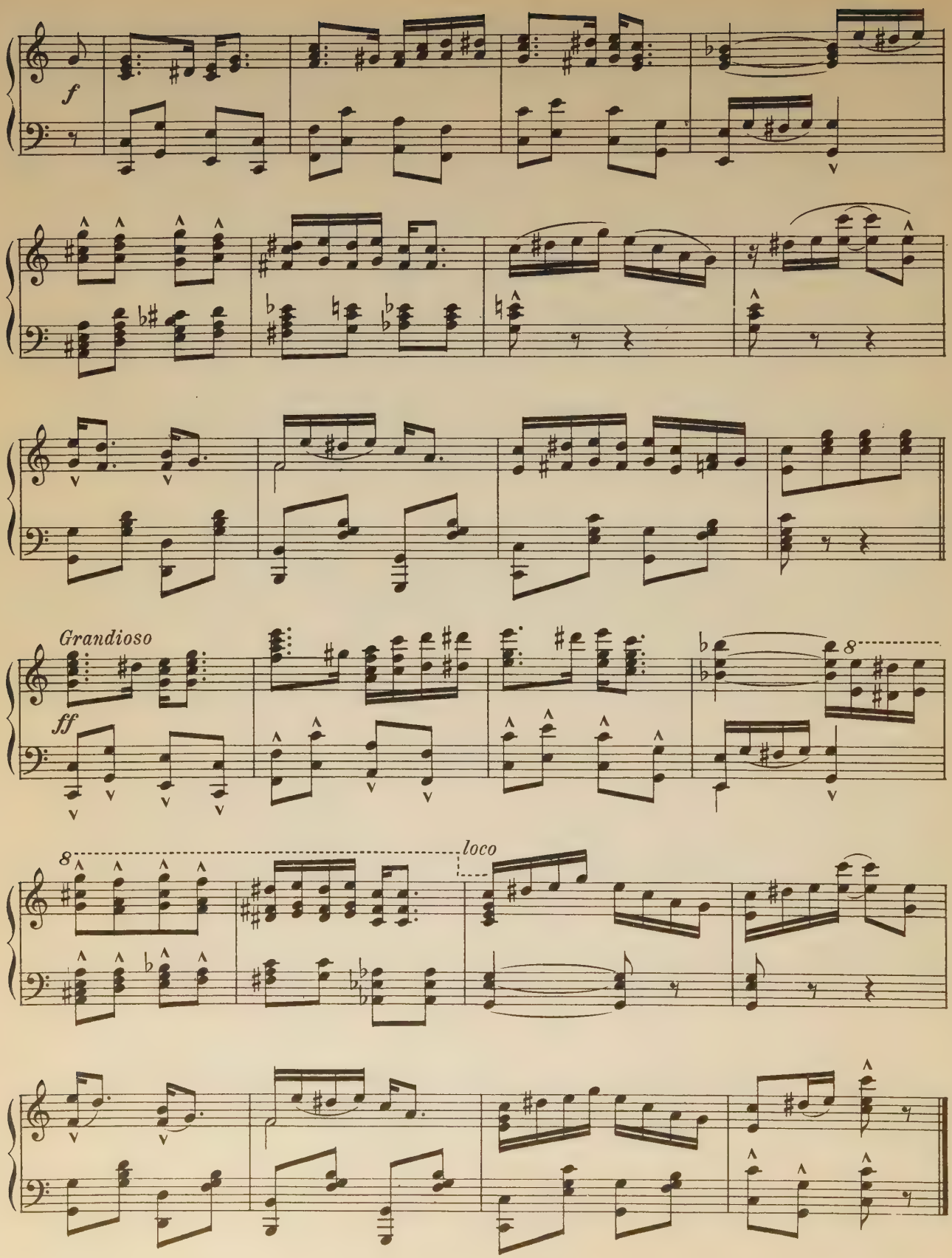

Con Spirito
ff
1
2
mf

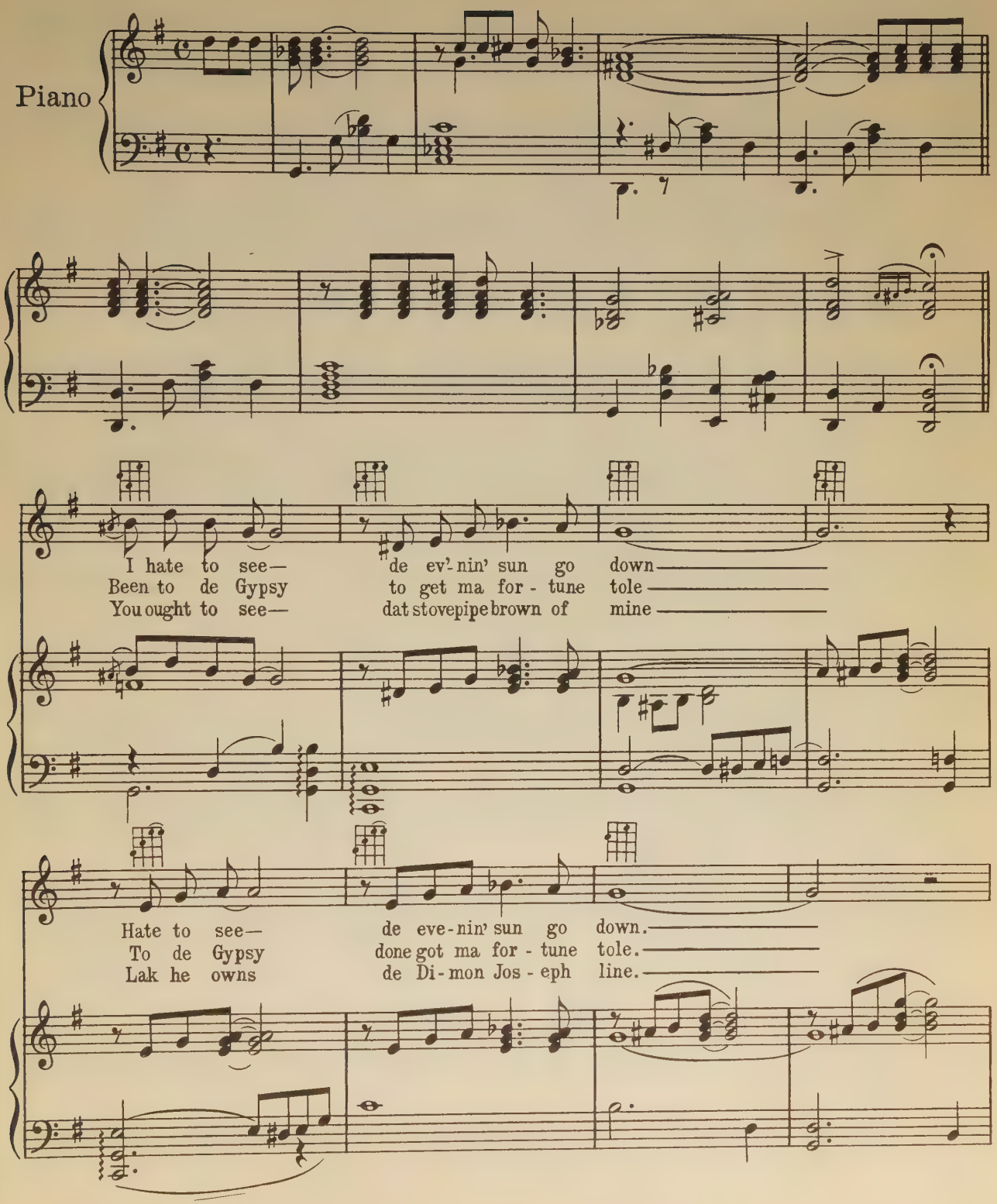

Brilliante
ff
pp dolce e espress.
mf


f
Grandioso
ff
8
loco

ST. LOUIS BLUES

Ukulele in D Tuning

Words and Music by
W. C. HANDY


Piano
I hate to see— de ev'-nin' sun go down
Been to de Gypsy to get ma for - tune tole
You ought to see— dat stovepipe brown of mine
Hate to see— de eve-nin' sun go down.
To de Gypsy done got ma for - tune tole.
Lak he owns de Di-mon Jos - eph line.

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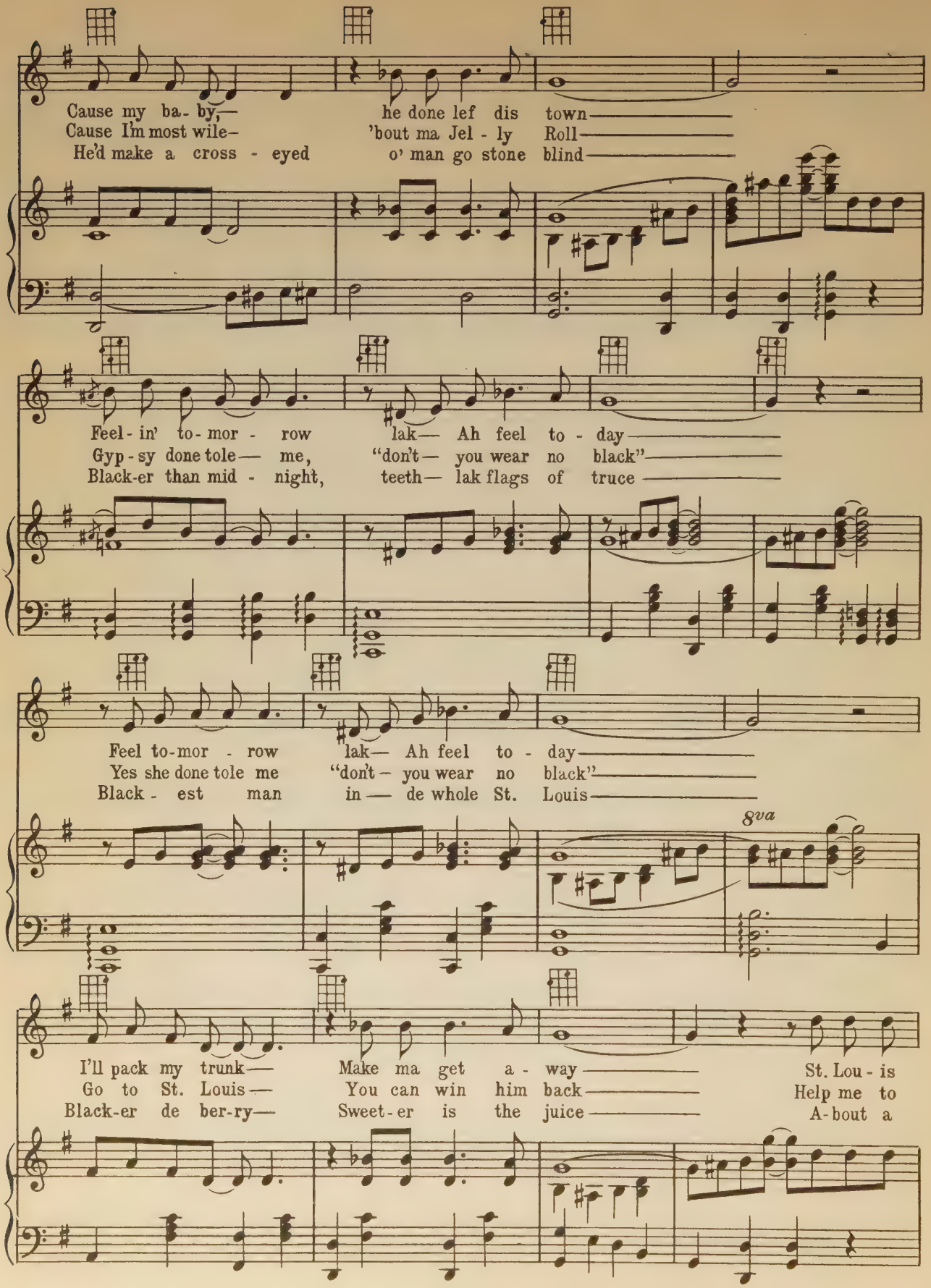
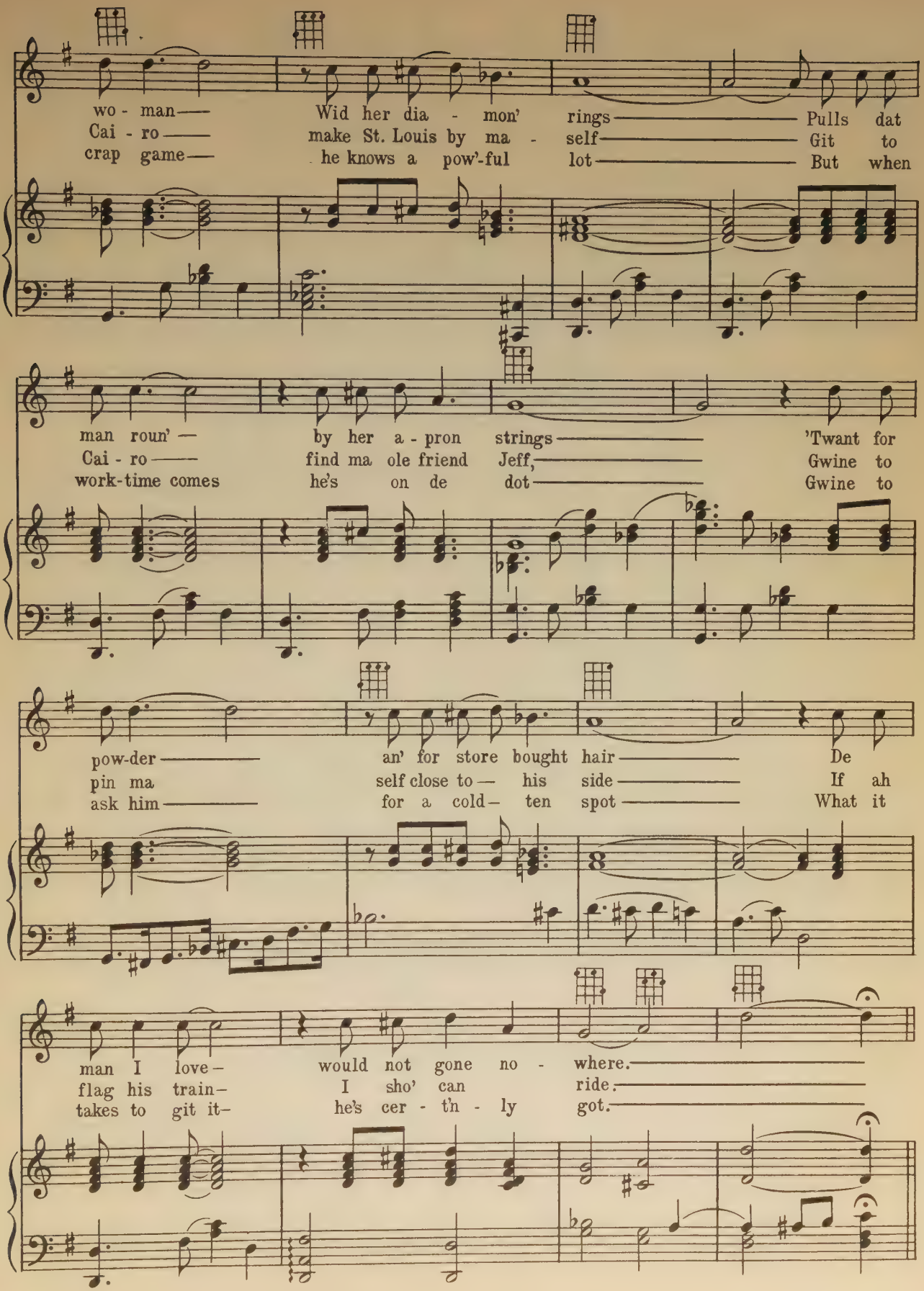
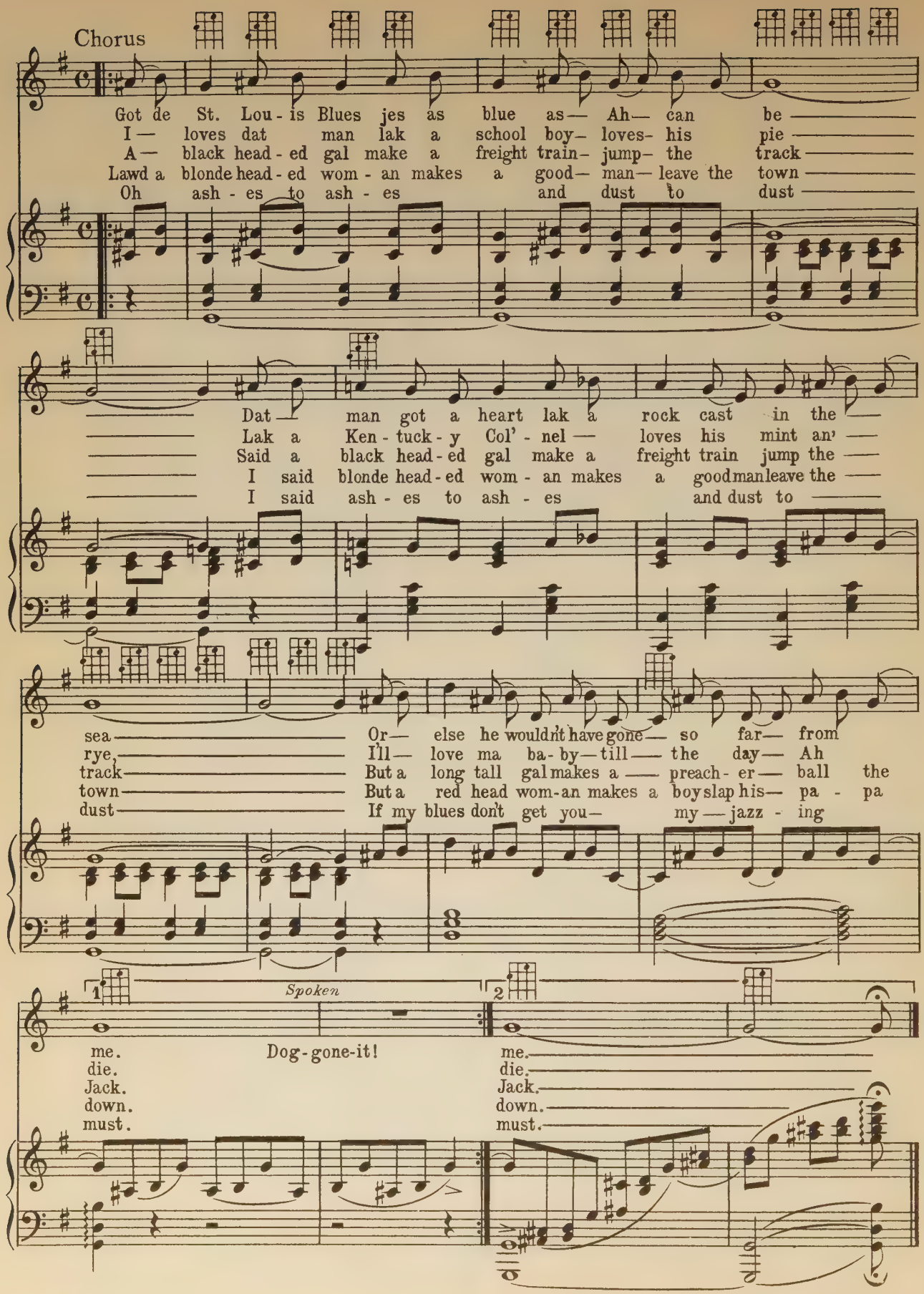
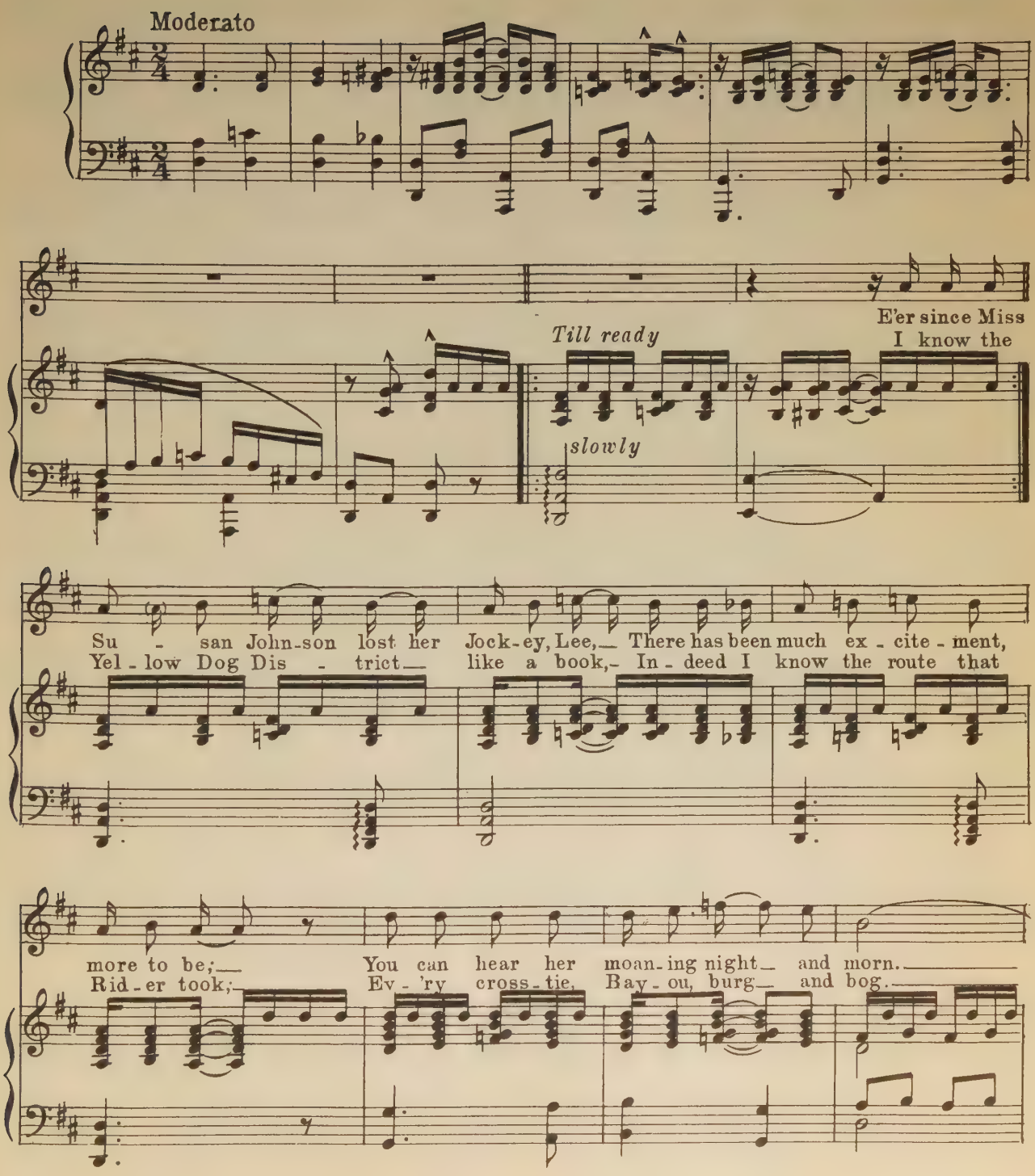

Cause my ba- by,— he done lef dis town——
Cause I'm most wile— 'bout ma Jel - ly Roll——
He'd make a cross - eyed o' man go stone blind——
Feel - in' to - mor - row lak— Ah feel to - day——
Gyp - sy done tole— me, "don't— you wear no black"——
Black-er than mid - night, teeth— lak flags of truce——
Feel to-mor - row lak— Ah feel to - day——
Yes she done tole me "don't— you wear no black"——
Black - est man in— de whole St. Louis——
8va
I'll pack my trunk— Make ma get a - way—— St. Lou - is
Go to St. Louis— You can win him back—— Help me to
Black-er de ber-ry— Sweet-er is the juice—— A-bout a


wo - man— Wid her dia - mon' rings— Pulls dat
Cai - ro— make St. Louis by ma - self— Git to
crap game— he knows a pow'-ful lot— But when
man roun'— by her a - pron strings— 'Twant for
Cai - ro— find ma ole friend Jeff,— Gwine to
work-time comes he's on de dot— Gwine to
pow-der— an' for store bought hair— De
pin ma self close to— his side— If ah
ask him— for a cold— ten spot— What it
man I love— would not gone no - where.—
flag his train— I sho' can ride.—
takes to git it— he's cer - t'n - ly got.—


Chorus
Got de St. Lou - is Blues jes as blue as— Ah— can be
I— loves dat man lak a school boy— loves- his pie
A— black head - ed gal make a freight train— jump- the track
Lawd a blonde head - ed wom - an makes a good— man— leave the town
Oh ash - es to ash - es and dust to dust
Dat— man got a heart lak a rock cast in the
Lak a Ken - tuck - y Col' - nel — loves his mint an'
Said a black head - ed gal make a freight train jump the
I said blonde head - ed wom - an makes a goodmanleave the
I said ash - es to ash - es and dust to
sea— Or— else he wouldn't have gone— so far— from
rye, I'll— love ma ba - by— till— the day— Ah
track— But a long tall gal makes a— preach - er— ball the
town— But a red head wom-an makes a boyslap his— pa - pa
dust— If my blues don't get you— my— jazz - ing
1
Spoken
Dog-gone-it!
me.
die.
Jack.
down.
must.
2
me.
die.
Jack.
down.
must.

YELLOW DOG BLUES

Words and Music by
W. C. HANDY


Moderato
Till ready
slowly
E'er since Miss
I know the
Su - san John-son lost her Jock-ey, Lee,— There has been much ex - cite - ment,
Yel - low Dog Dis - trict— like a book,- In - deed I know the route that
more to be;— You can hear her moan-ing night— and morn.—
Rid - er took;— Ev - 'ry cross - tie, Bay - ou, burg— and bog.—

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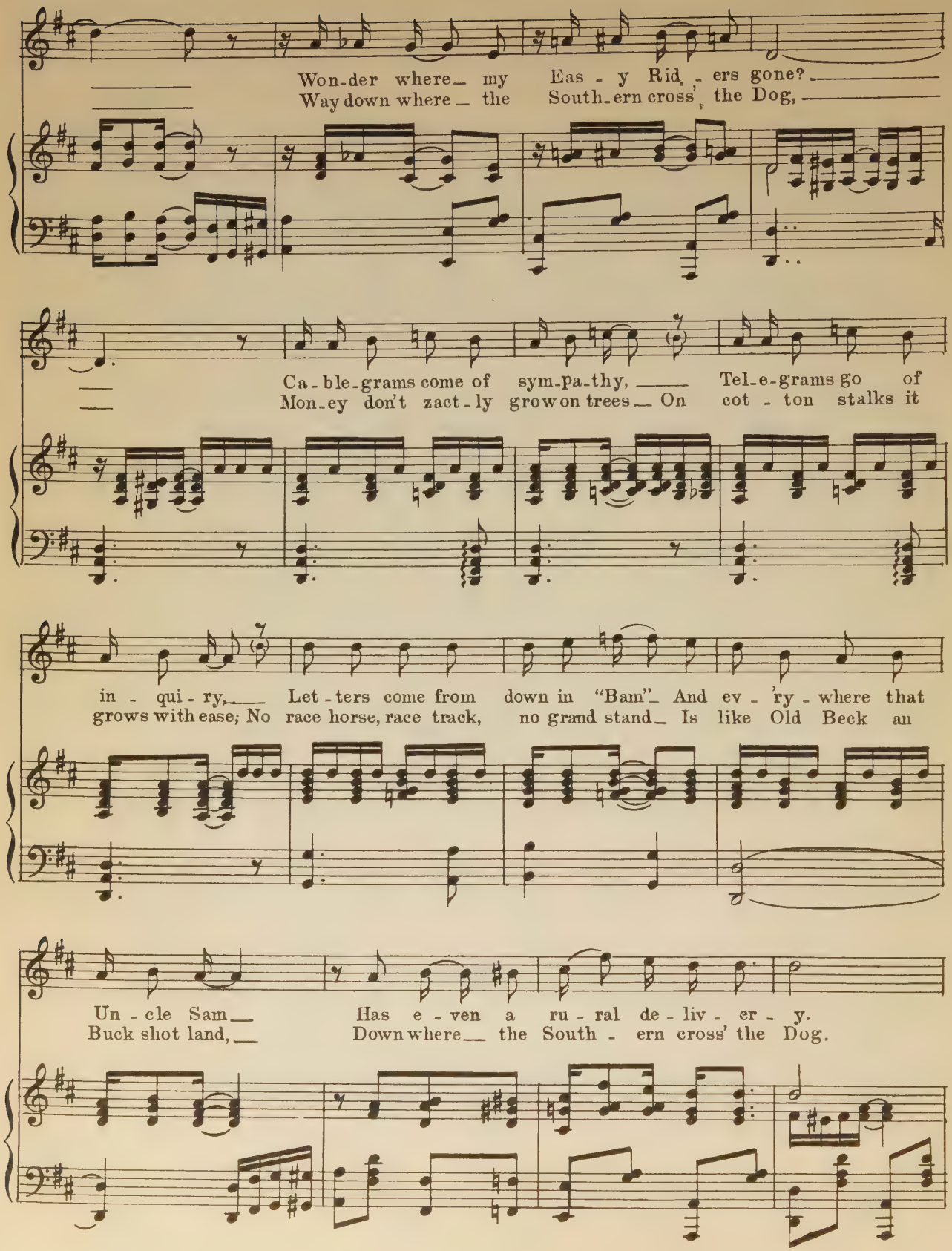
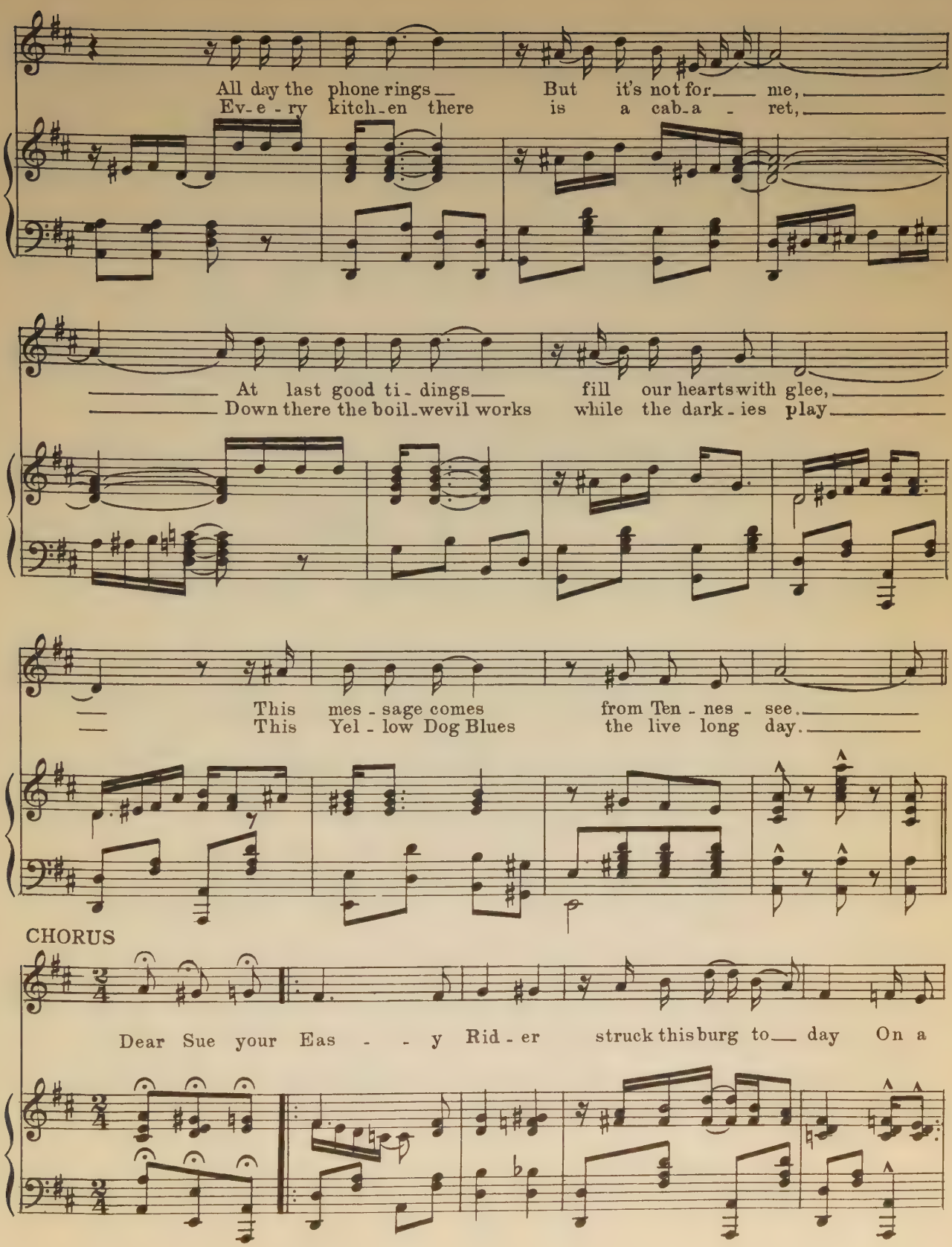
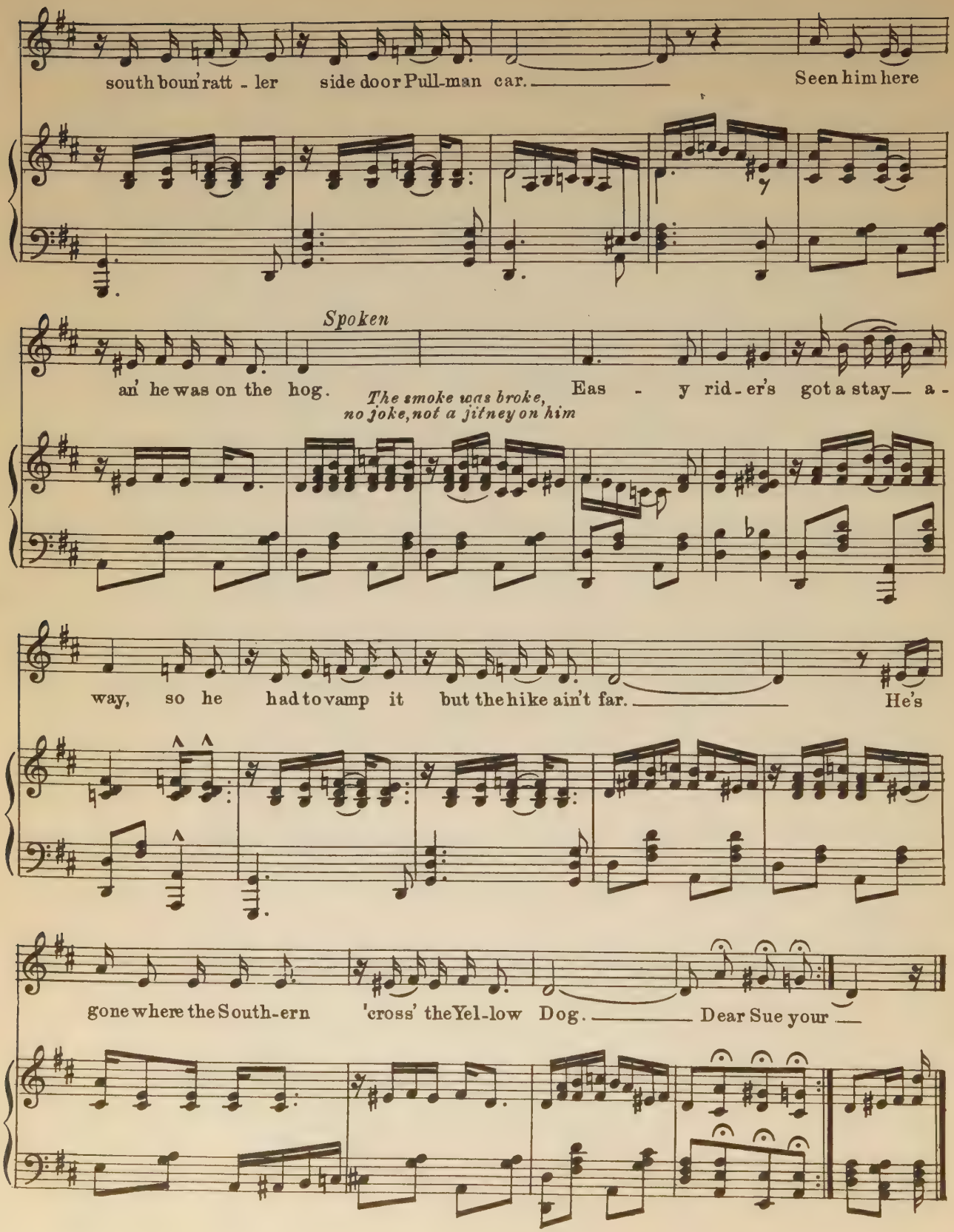

Won-der where my Eas - y Rid - ers gone?
Way down where the South-ern cross' the Dog,
Ca-ble-grams come of sym-pa-thy, Tel-e-grams go of
Mon-ey don't zact-ly grow on trees On cot - ton stalks it
in - qui - ry, Let - ters come from down in "Bam" And ev - 'ry - where that
grows with ease; No race horse, race track, no grand stand Is like Old Beck an
Un - cle Sam Has e - ven a ru - ral de - liv - er - y.
Buck shot land, Down where the South - ern cross' the Dog.

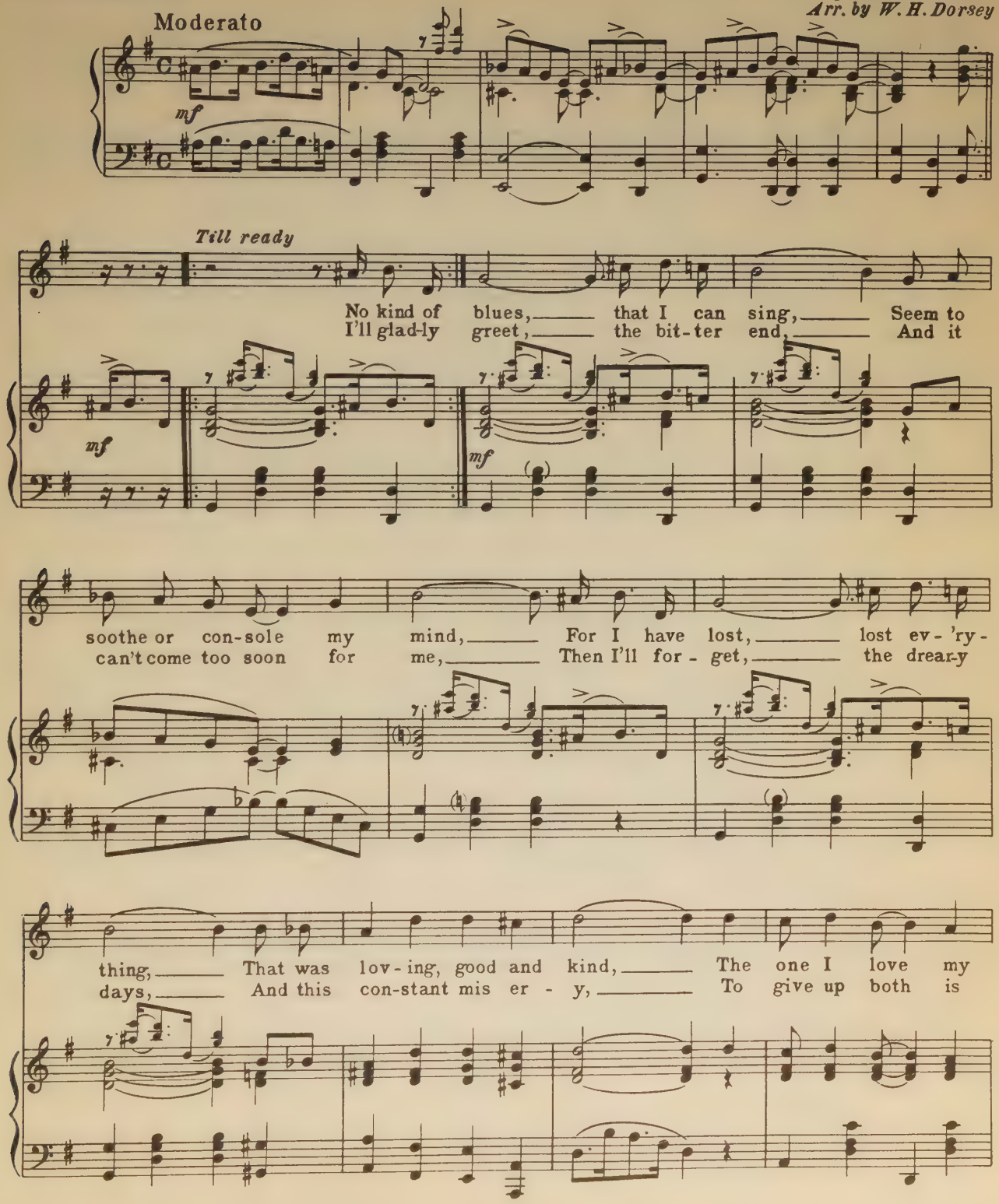

All day the phone rings But it's not for me,
Ev-e-ry kitch-en there is a cab-a-ret,
At last good ti-dings fill our hearts with glee,
Down there the boil-wevil works while the dark-ies play
This mes-sage comes from Ten-nes-see.
This Yel-low Dog Blues the live long day.
CHORUS
Dear Sue your Eas - - y Rid-er struck this burg to-day On a


south boun' ratt - ler side door Pull-man car.
Seen him here
Spoken
an' he was on the hog.
The smoke was broke, no joke, not a jitney on him
Eas - y rid - er's got a stay — a -
way, so he had to vamp it but the hike ain't far.
He's
gone where the South-ern 'cross' the Yel-low Dog.
Dear Sue your —

THE LONG LOST BLUES

Words by
H. ALF KELLEY

Music by
J. PAUL WYER
Arr. by W. H. Dorsey


Moderato
mf
Till ready
No kind of blues, that I can sing, Seem to
I'll glad-ly greet, the bit-ter end, And it
mf
mf
soothe or con-sole my mind, For I have lost, lost ev-'ry-
can't come too soon for me, Then I'll for-get, the dreary
thing, That was lov-ing, good and kind, The one I love my
days, And this con-stant mis er - y, To give up both is

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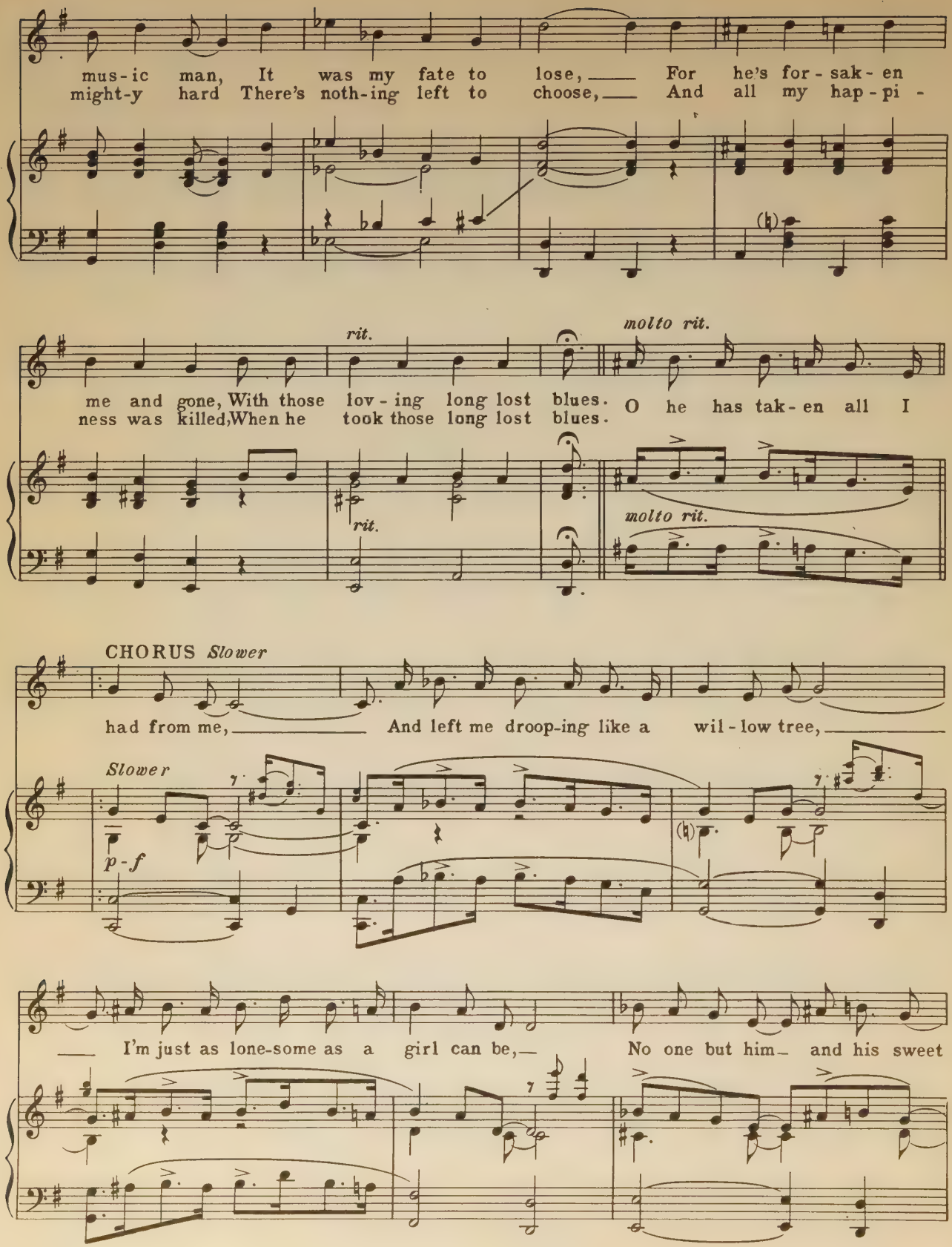
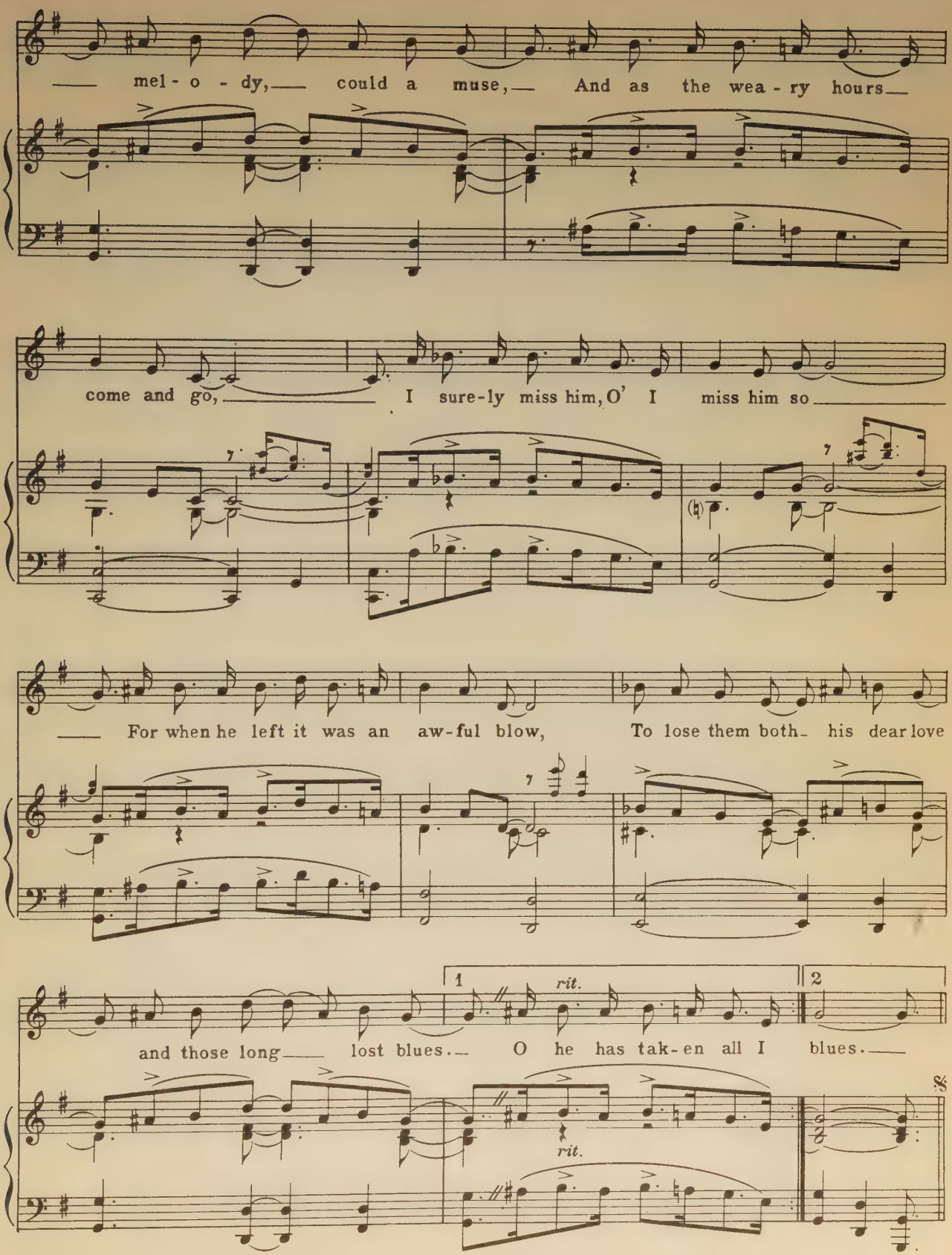
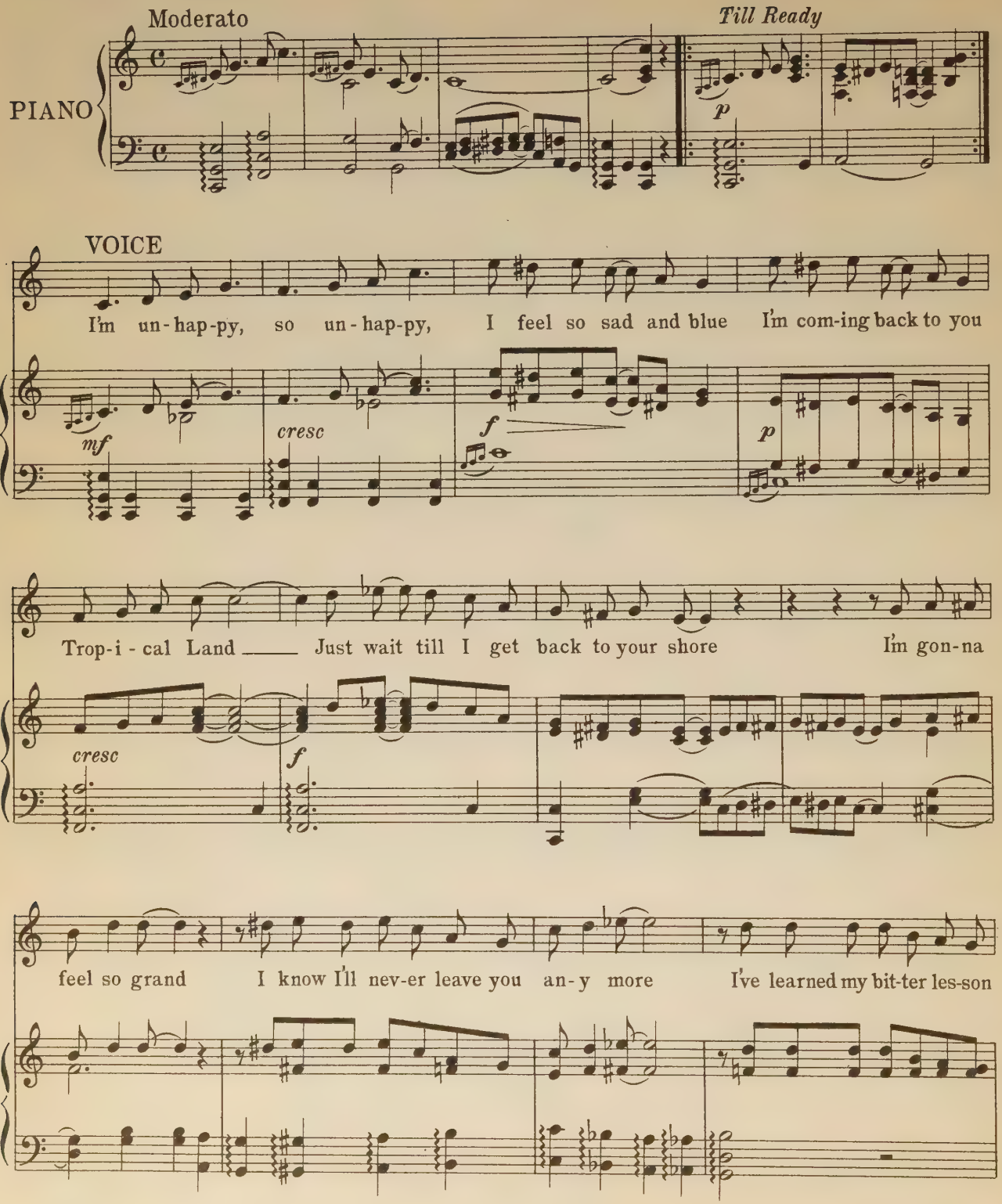

mus-ic man, It was my fate to lose, For he's for-sak-en
might-y hard There's noth-ing left to choose, And all my hap-pi-
rit.
molto rit.
me and gone, With those lov-ing long lost blues. O he has tak-en all I
ness was killed, When he took those long lost blues.
rit.
molto rit.
CHORUS Slower
had from me, And left me droop-ing like a wil-low tree,
Slower
p-f
I'm just as lone-some as a girl can be, No one but him and his sweet


mel - o - dy, could a muse, And as the wea - ry hours
come and go, I sure-ly miss him, O' I miss him so
For when he left it was an aw-ful blow, To lose them both his dear love
and those long lost blues. O he has tak-en all I blues.
1
2
rit.
rit.

THE FLORIDA BLUES

Music by
Wm KING PHILLIPS
Rearranged by W. C. Handy

Words by
DAVE HOFFMAN and
ARTHUR NEALE


Moderato
Till Ready
PIANO
p
VOICE
I'm un-hap-py, so un-hap-py, I feel so sad and blue I'm com-ing back to you
mf
cresc
f
p
Trop-i-cal Land Just wait till I get back to your shore I'm gon-na
cresc
f
feel so grand I know I'll nev-er leave you an-y more I've learned my bit-ter les-son

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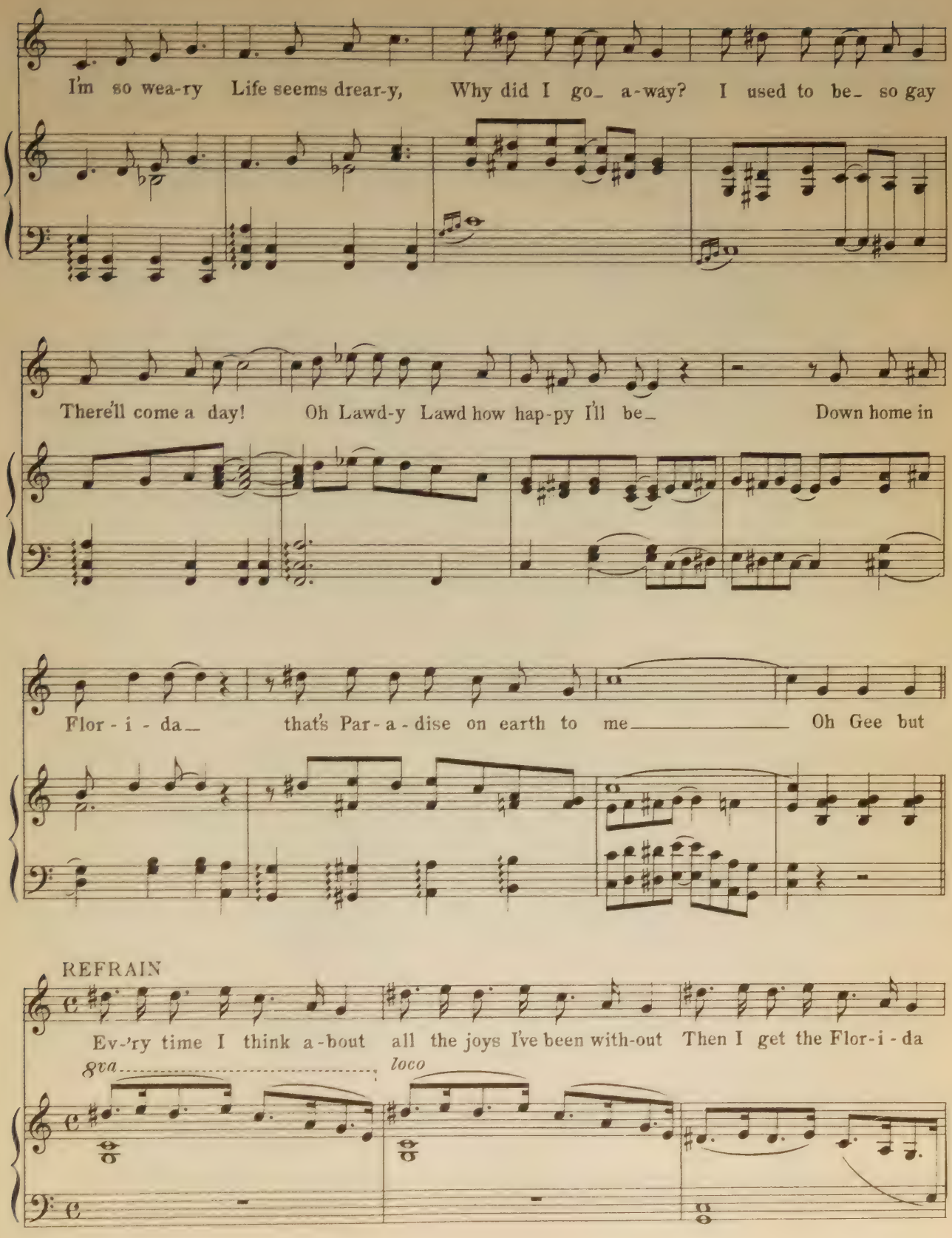
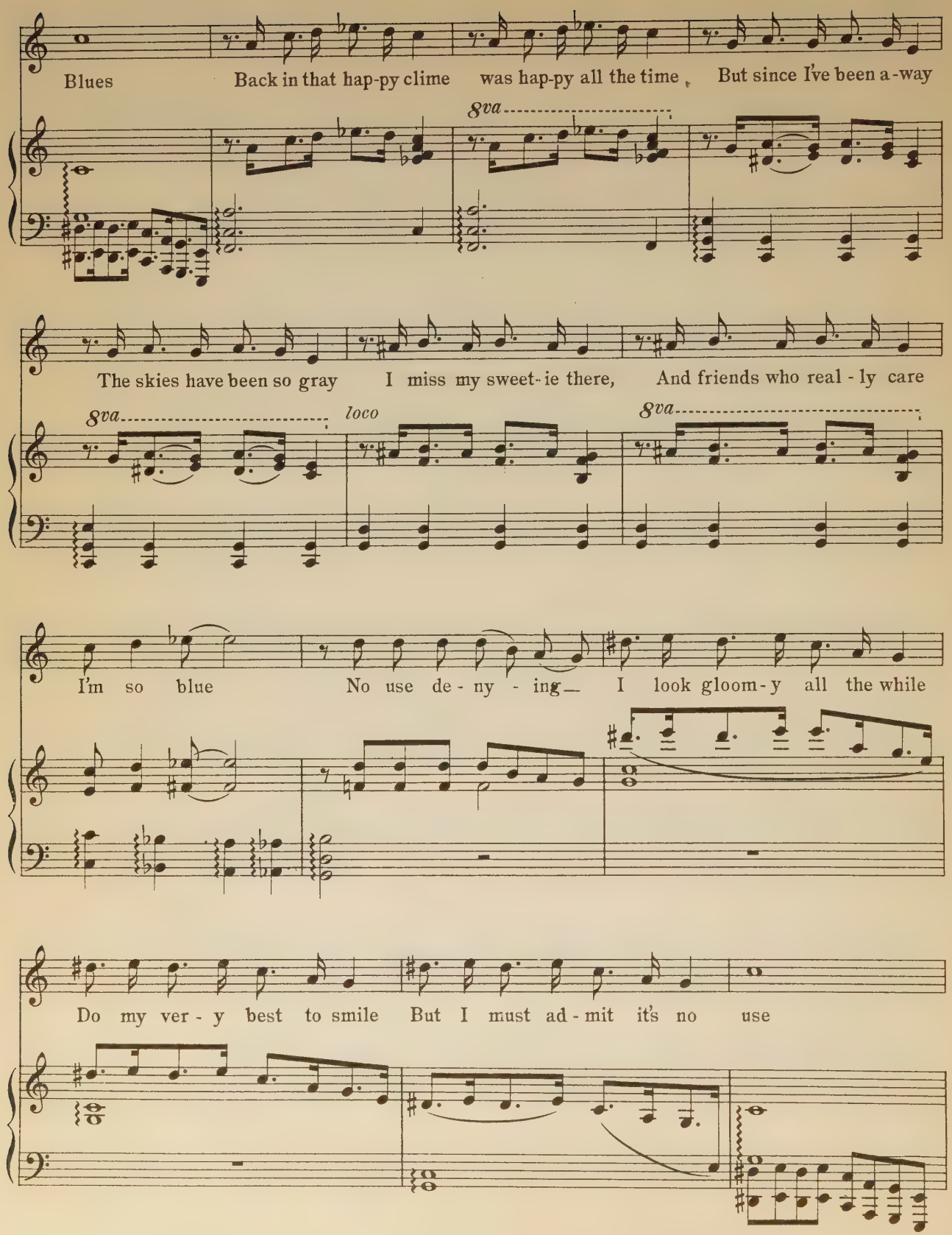
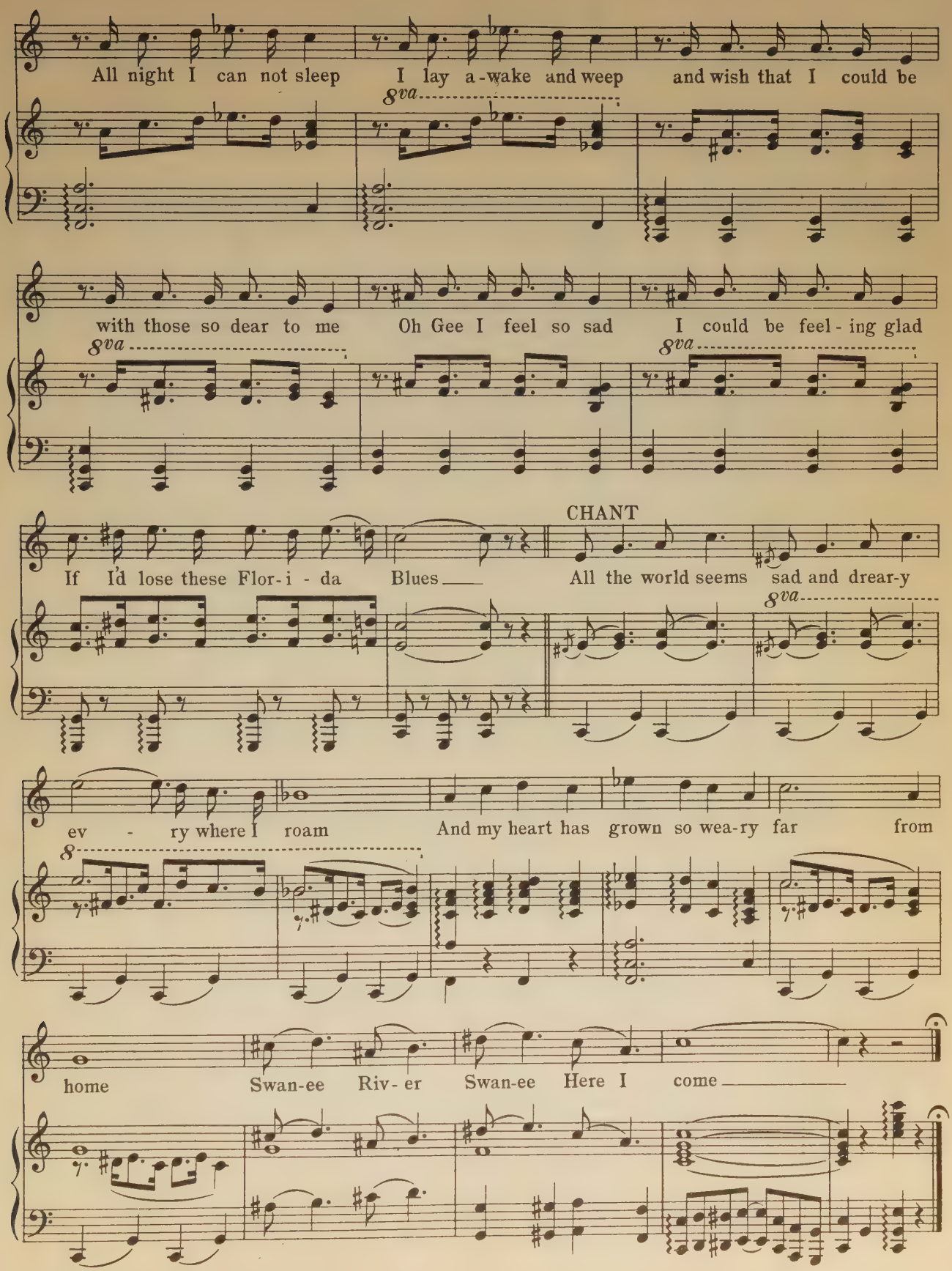
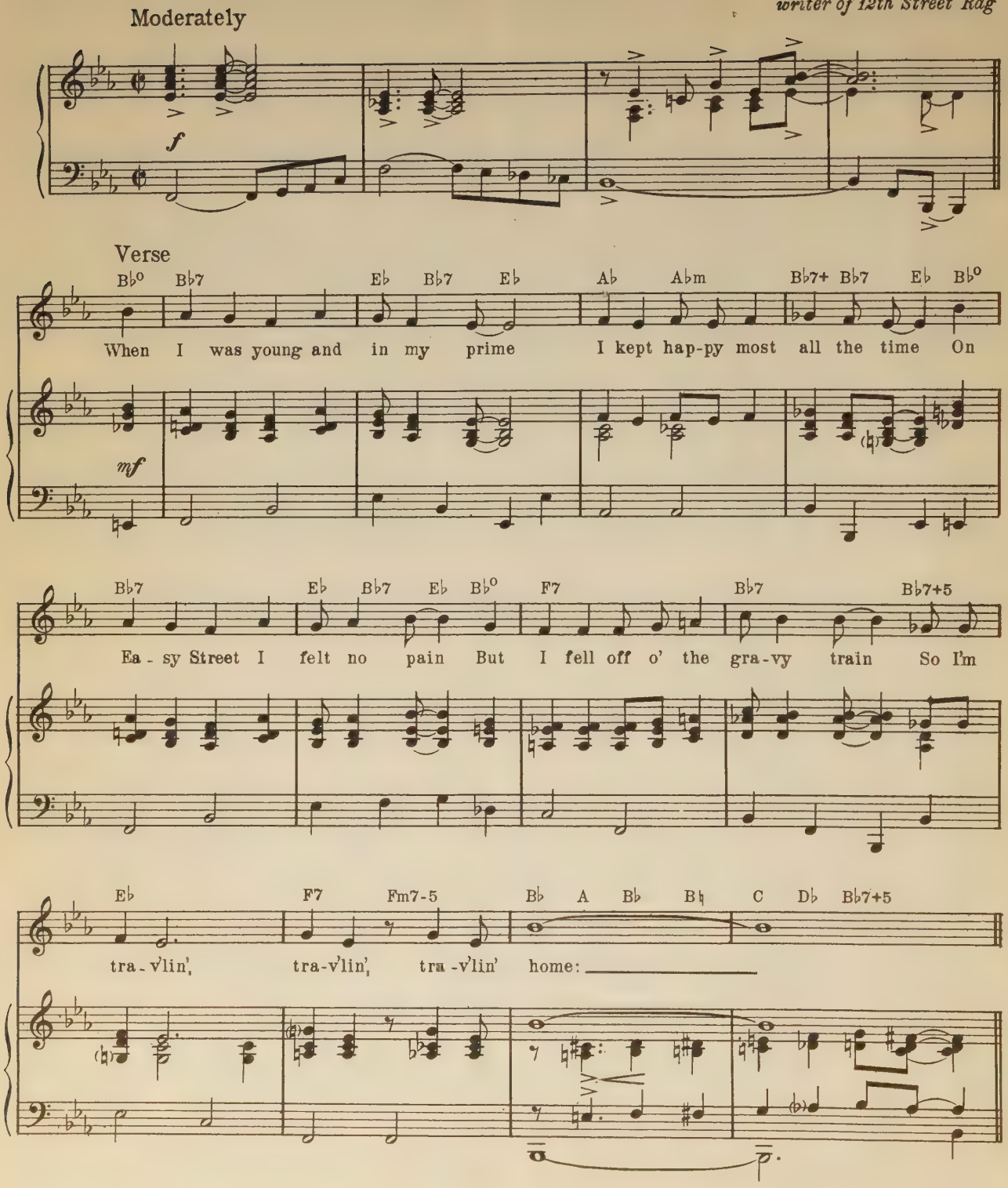

I'm so wea-ry Life seems drear-y, Why did I go_ a-way? I used to be_ so gay
There'll come a day! Oh Lawd-y Lawd how hap-py I'll be_ Down home in
Flor - i - da_ that's Par - a - dise on earth to me_____ Oh Gee but
REFRAIN
Ev-'ry time I think a-bout all the joys I've been with-out Then I get the Flor-i - da
8va
loco


Blues
Back in that hap-py clime was hap-py all the time
But since I've been a-way
8va
The skies have been so gray
I miss my sweet-ie there,
And friends who real-ly care
8va
loco
8va
I'm so blue
No use de-ny-ing
I look gloom-y all the while
Do my ver-y best to smile
But I must ad-mit it's no use


All night I can not sleep I lay a-wake and weep and wish that I could be
8va
with those so dear to me Oh Gee I feel so sad I could be feel-ing glad
8va
8va
CHANT
If I'd lose these Flor-i-da Blues All the world seems sad and drear-y
8va
ev-ry where I roam And my heart has grown so wea-ry far from
8
home Swan-ee Riv-er Swan-ee Here I come

KANSAS CITY

By WILLARD ROBISON
and EUDAY L. BOWMAN
writer of 12th Street Rag


Moderately
f
Verse
B♭° B♭7 E♭ B♭7 E♭ A♭ A♭m B♭7+ B♭7 E♭ B♭°
When I was young and in my prime I kept hap-py most all the time On
mf
B♭7 E♭ B♭7 E♭ B♭° F7 B♭7 B♭7+5
Ea - sy Street I felt no pain But I fell off o' the gra-vy train So I'm
E♭ F7 Fm7-5 B♭ A B♭ B♮ C D♭ B♭7+5
tra - v'lin', tra-v'lin', tra - v'lin' home: ____

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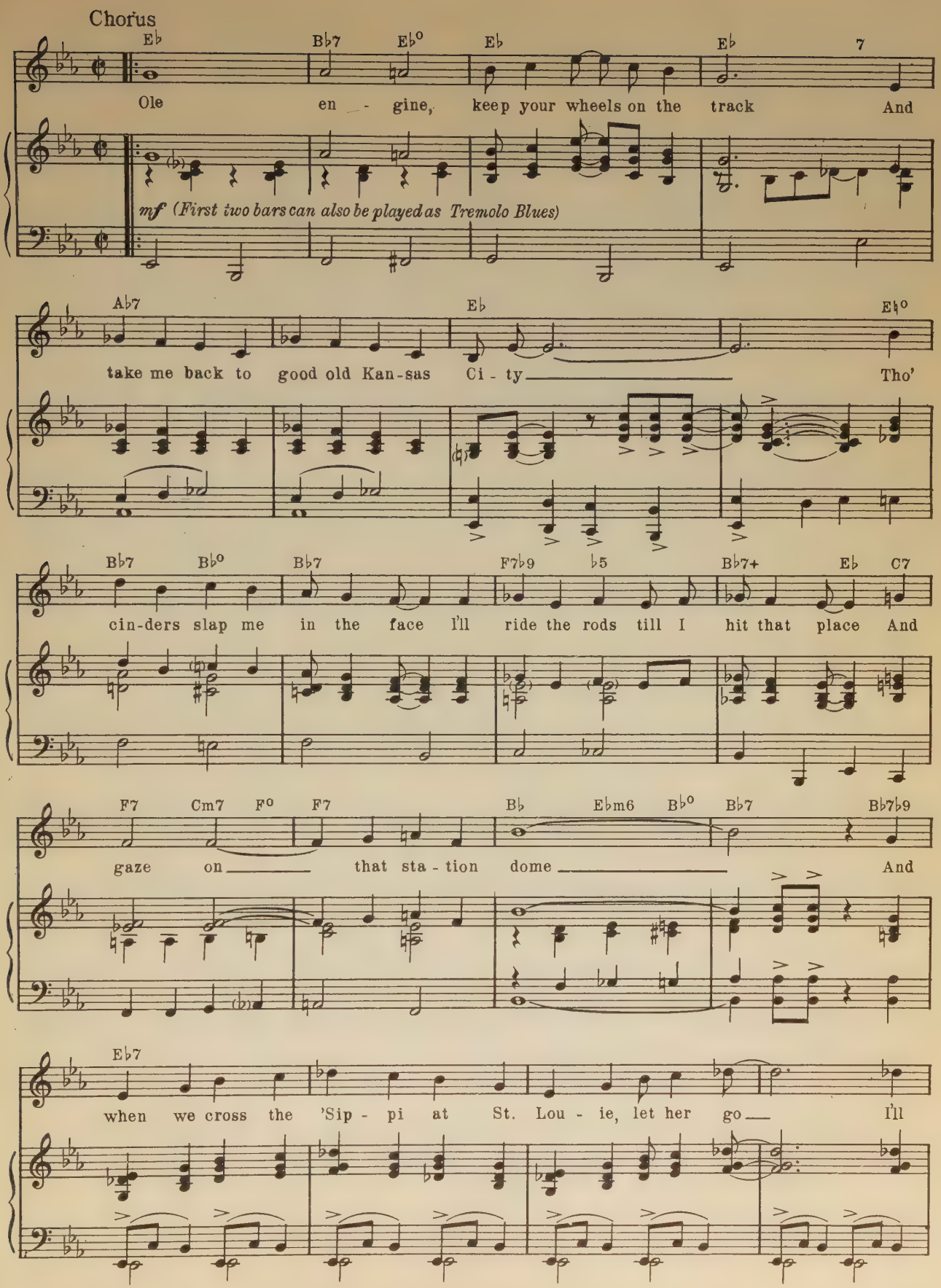
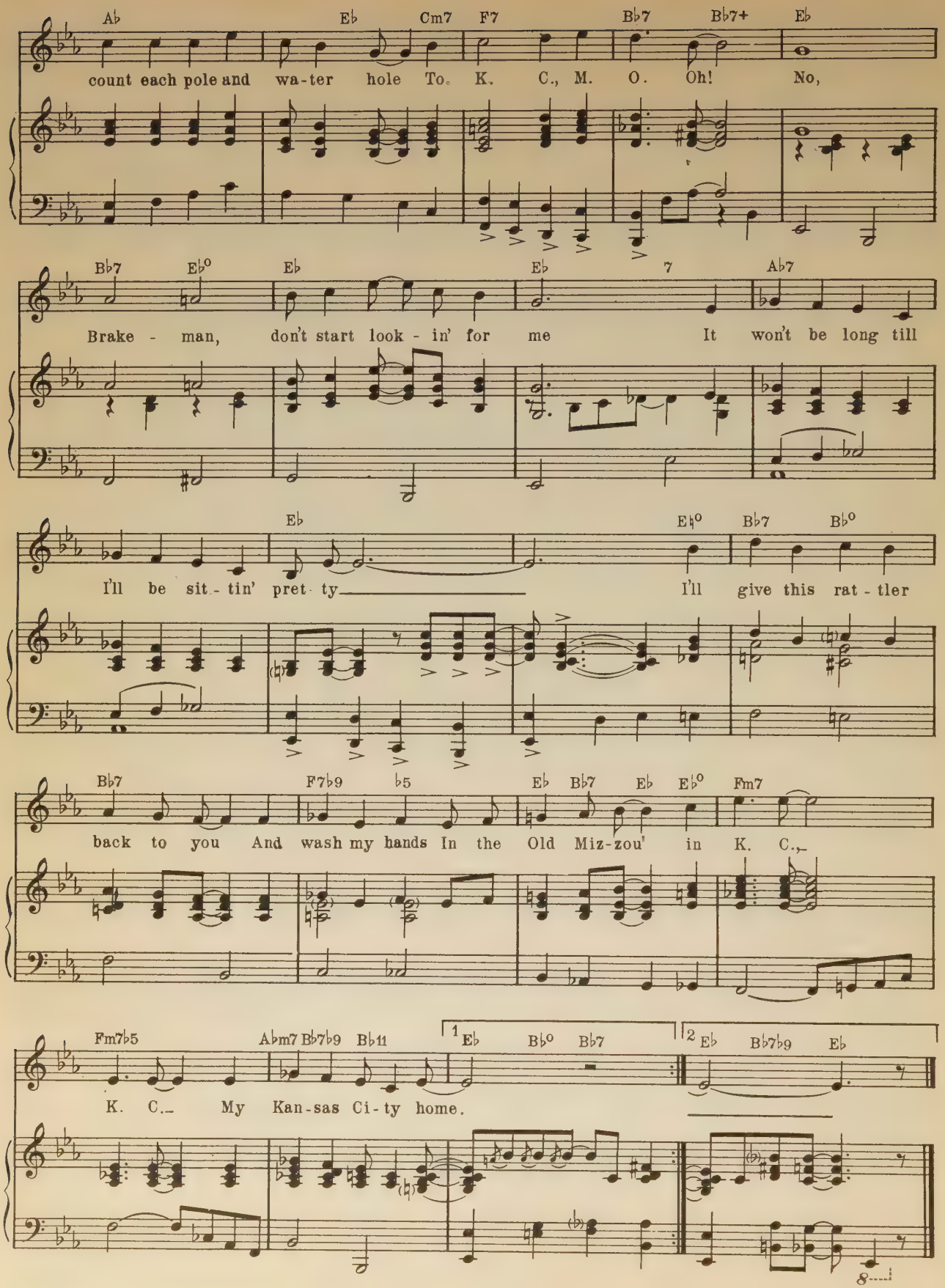
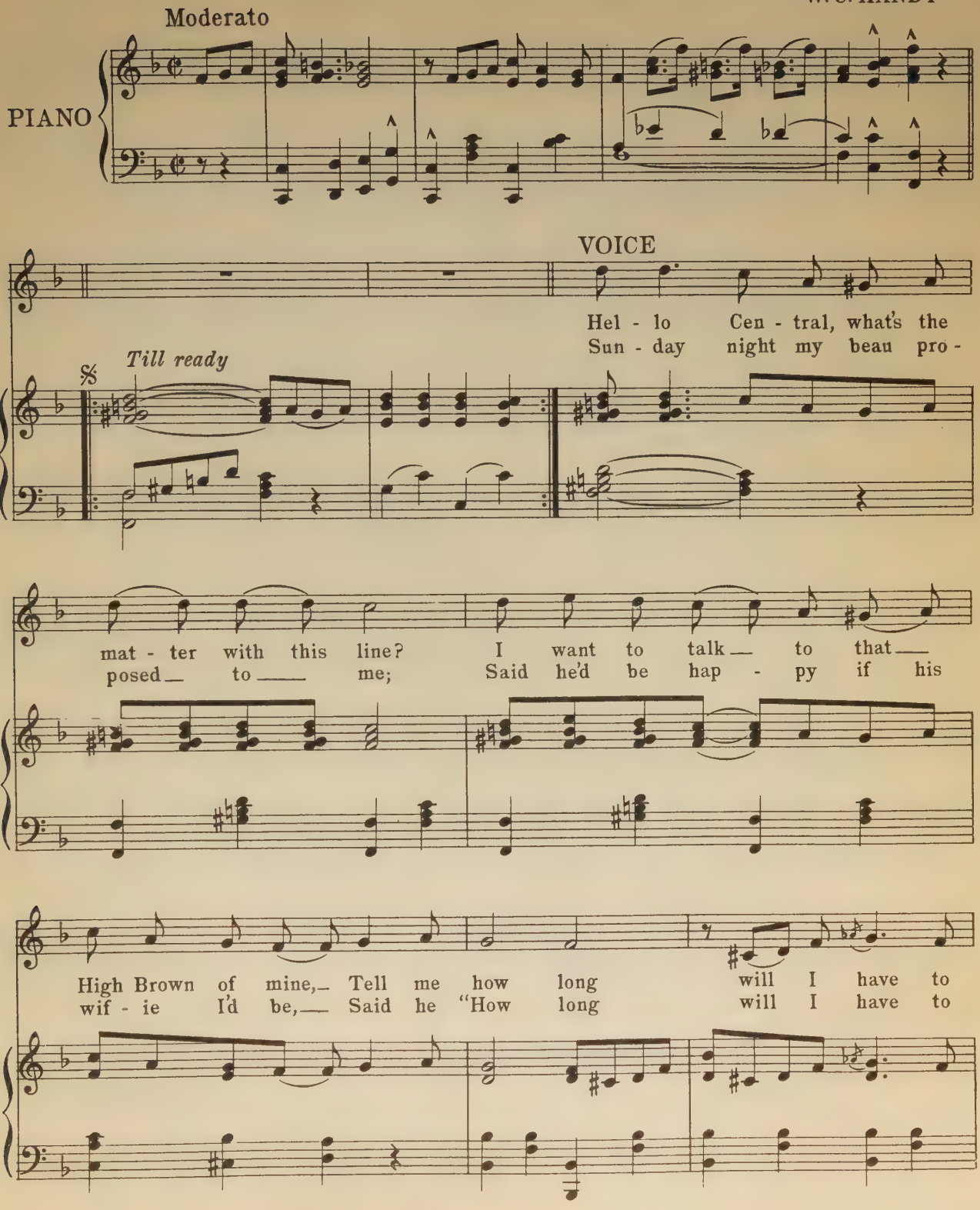

Chorus
E♭ B♭7 E♭° E♭ E♭ 7
Ole en - gine, keep your wheels on the track And
mf (First two bars can also be played as Tremolo Blues)
A♭7 E♭ E♭°
take me back to good old Kan-sas Ci - ty Tho'
B♭7 B♭° B♭7 F7♭9 ♭5 B♭7+ E♭ C7
cin-ders slap me in the face I'll ride the rods till I hit that place And
F7 Cm7 F° F7 B♭ E♭m6 B♭° B♭7 B♭7♭9
gaze on that sta - tion dome And
E♭7
when we cross the 'Sip - pi at St. Lou - ie, let her go I'll


A♭ E♭ Cm7 F7 B♭7 B♭7+ E♭
count each pole and wa-ter hole To. K. C., M. O. Oh! No,
B♭7 E♭° E♭ E♭ 7 A♭7
Brake - man, don't start look - in' for me It won't be long till
E♭ E♭° B♭7 B♭°
I'll be sit - tin' pret - ty I'll give this rat - tler
B♭7 F7♭9 ♭5 E♭ B♭7 E♭ E♭° Fm7
back to you And wash my hands In the Old Miz-zou' in K. C.
Fm7♭5 A♭m7 B♭7♭9 B♭11 1 E♭ B♭° B♭7 2 E♭ B♭7♭9 E♭
K. C. My Kan-sas Ci-ty home.

THE HESITATING BLUES

Words and Music by
W. C. HANDY


Moderato
PIANO
VOICE
Hel - lo Cen - tral, what's the
Sun - day night my beau pro -
Till ready
mat - ter with this line?
posed to me;
I want to talk to that
Said he'd be hap - py if his
High Brown of mine, Tell me how long will I have to
wif - ie I'd be, Said he "How long will I have to

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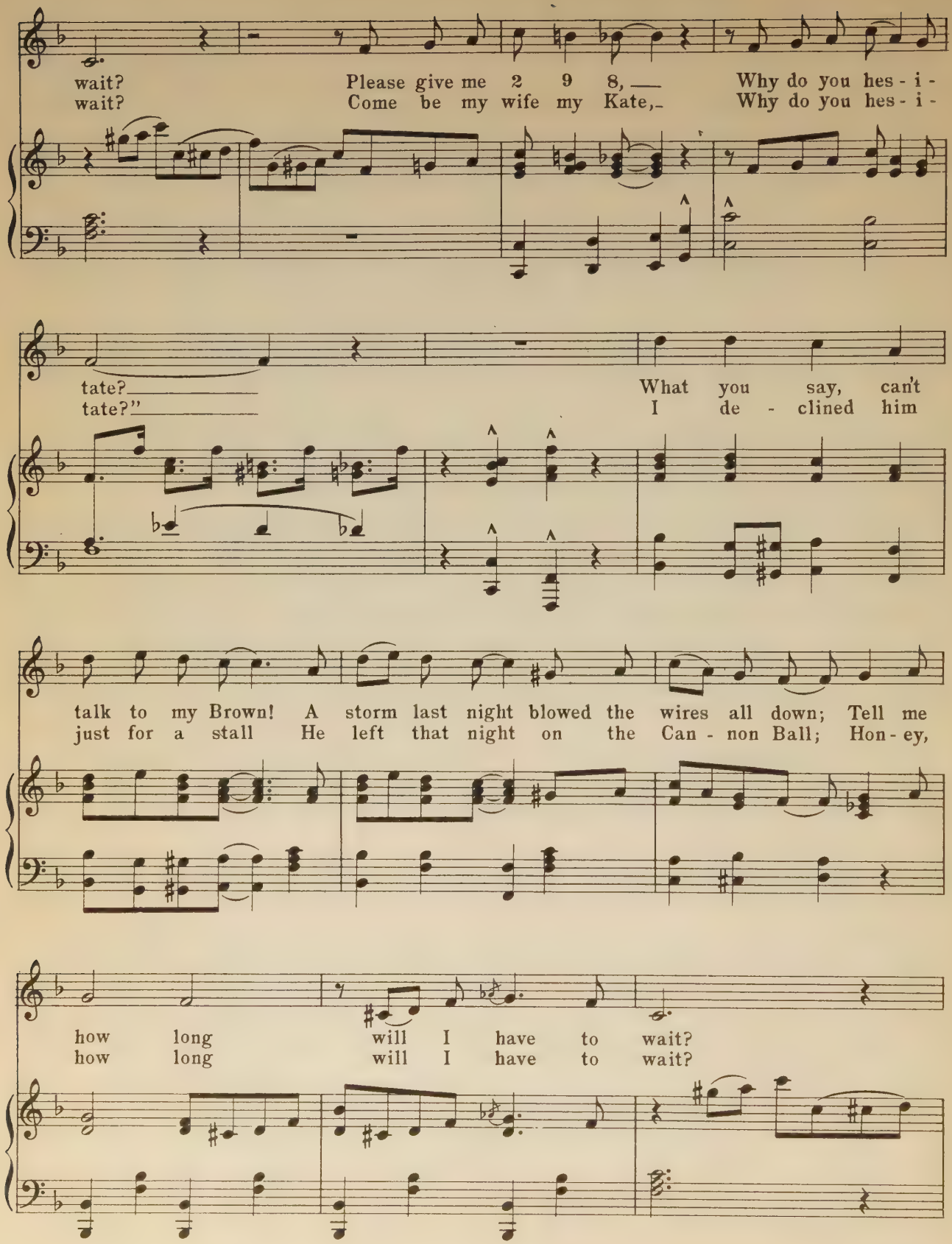
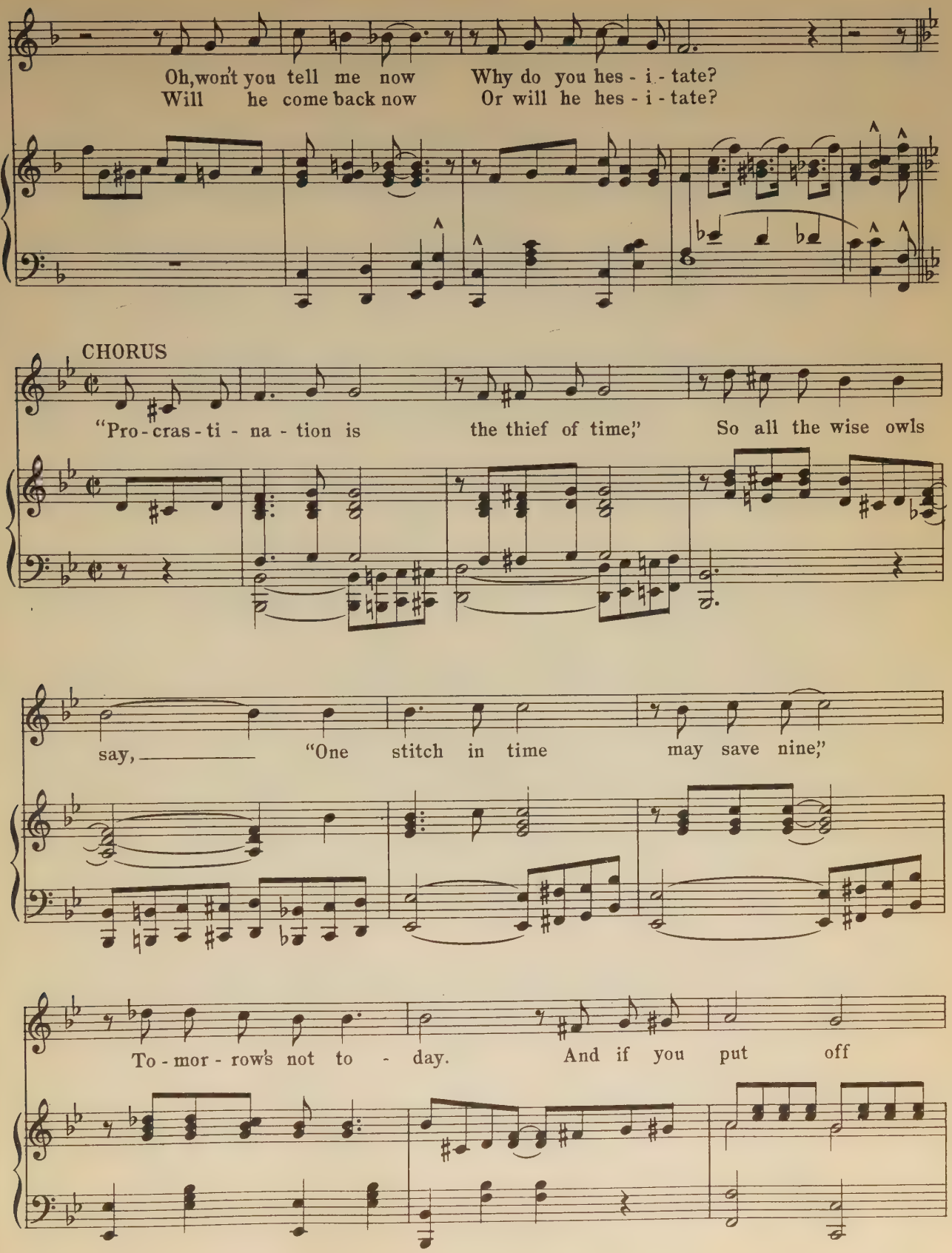
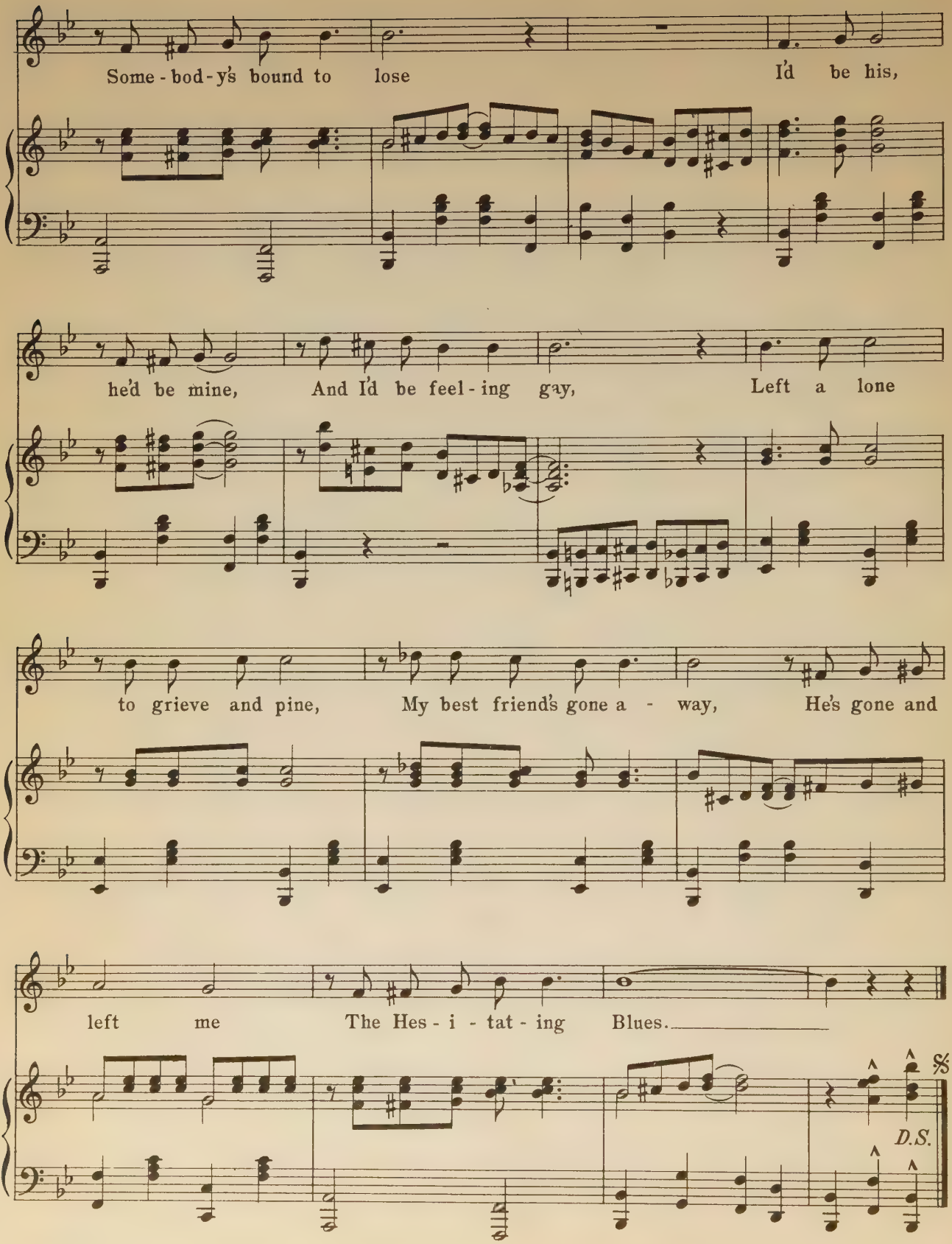
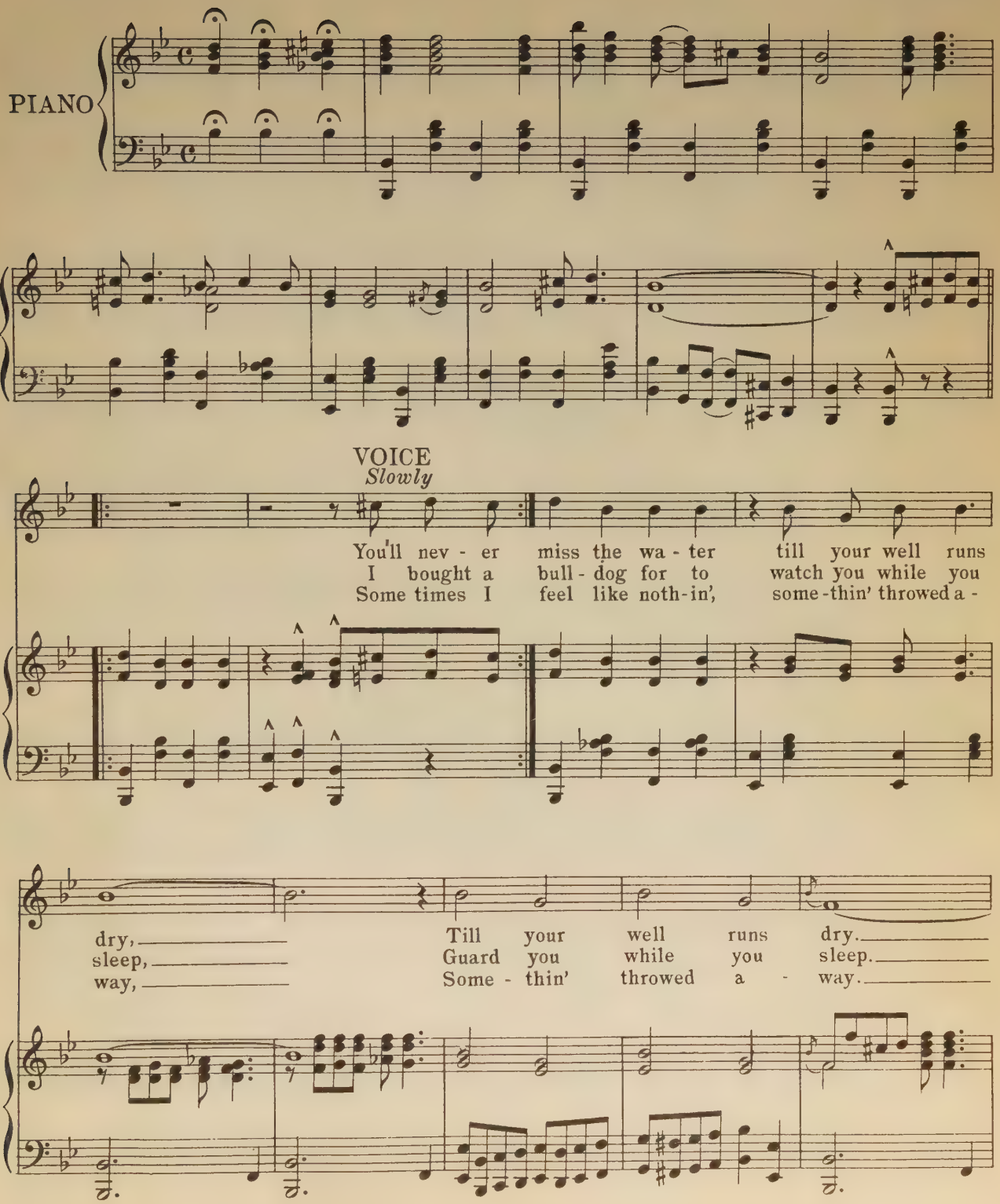

wait? Please give me 2 9 8, — Why do you hes - i -
wait? Come be my wife my Kate,- Why do you hes - i -
tate?— What you say, can't
tate?" I de - clined him
talk to my Brown! A storm last night blowed the wires all down; Tell me
just for a stall He left that night on the Can - non Ball; Hon - ey,
how long will I have to wait?
how long will I have to wait?


Oh, won't you tell me now Why do you hes - i - tate?
Will he come back now Or will he hes - i - tate?
CHORUS
"Pro - cras - ti - na - tion is the thief of time," So all the wise owls
say, "One stitch in time may save nine,"
To - mor - row's not to - day. And if you put off


Some-bod-y's bound to lose I'd be his,
he'd be mine, And I'd be feel-ing gay, Left a lone
to grieve and pine, My best friend's gone a - way, He's gone and
left me The Hes-i-tat-ing Blues.
D.S.

JOE TURNER BLUES

W. C. HANDY


PIANO
VOICE
Slowly
You'll nev - er miss the wa - ter till your well runs
I bought a bull - dog for to watch you while you
Some times I feel like noth-in', some-thin' throwed a -
dry,
sleep,
way,
Till your well runs dry.
Guard you while you sleep.
Some - thin' throwed a - way.

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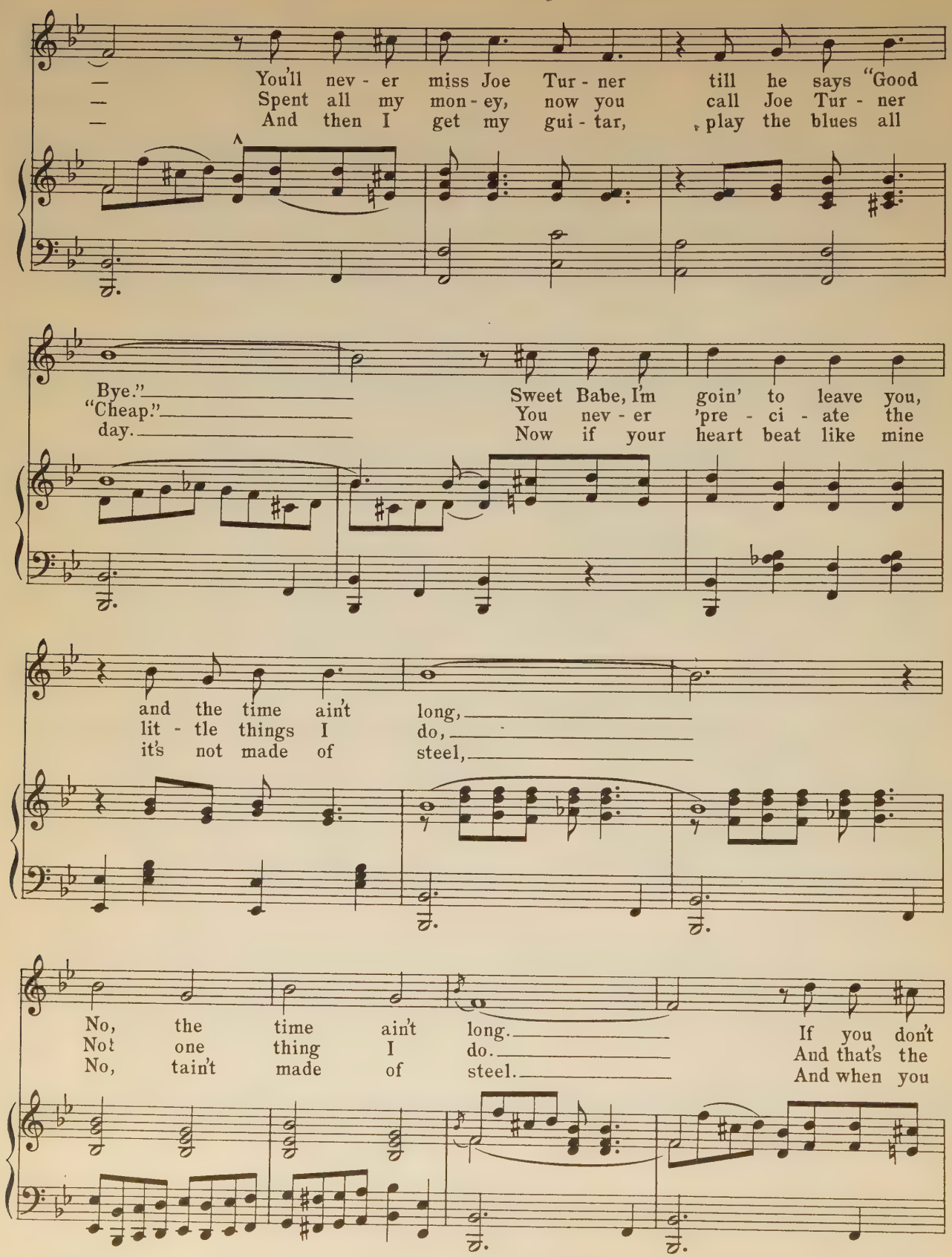
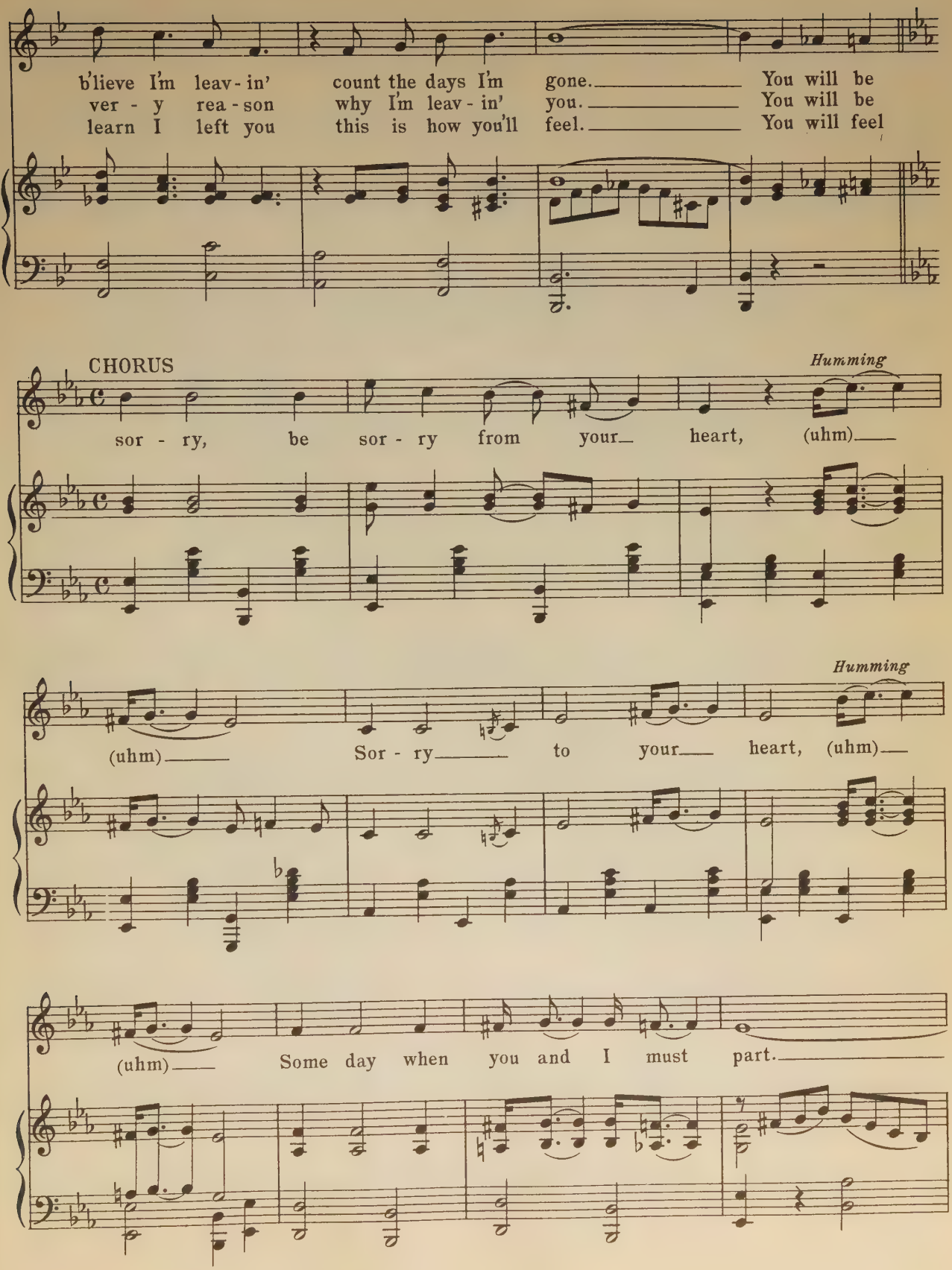
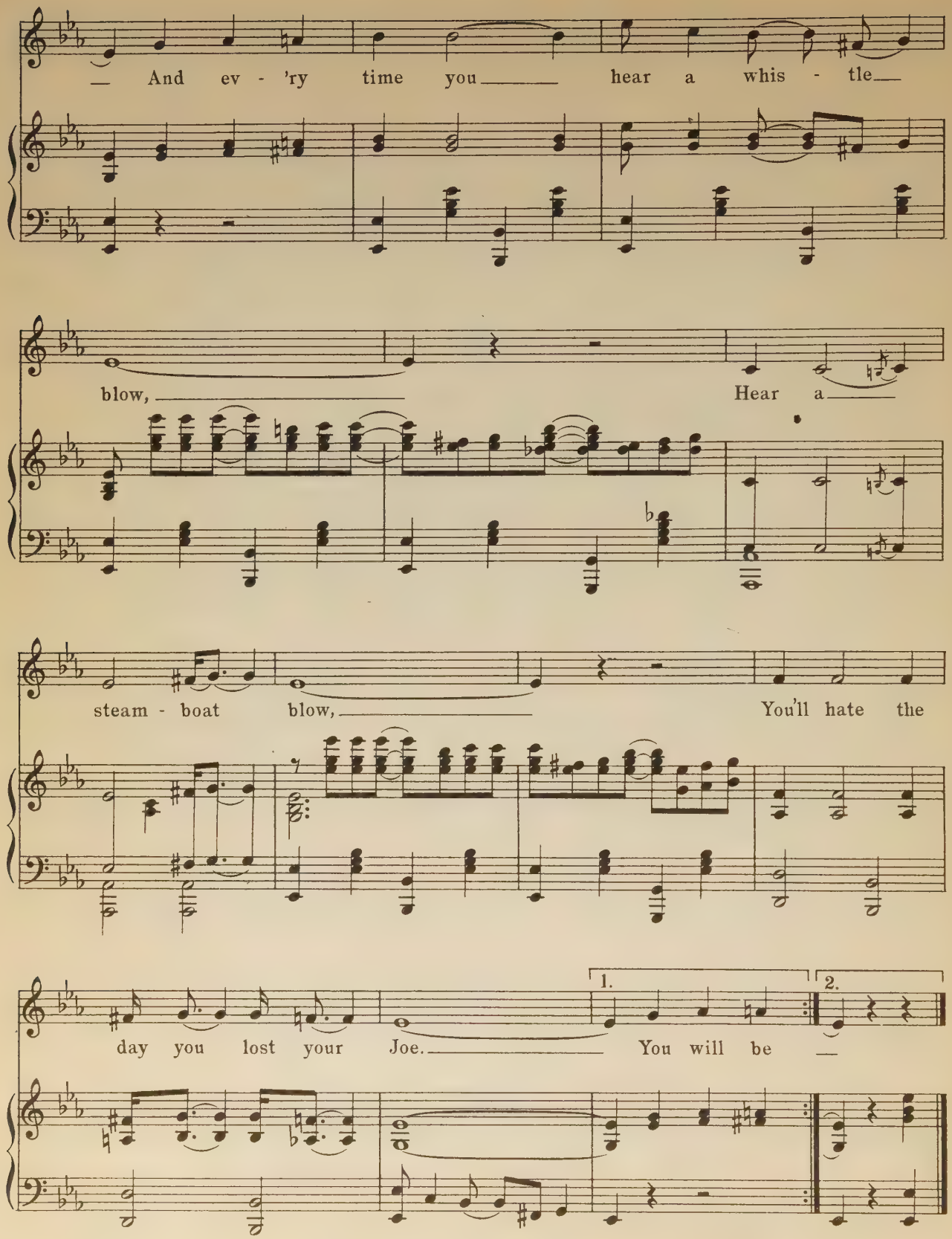
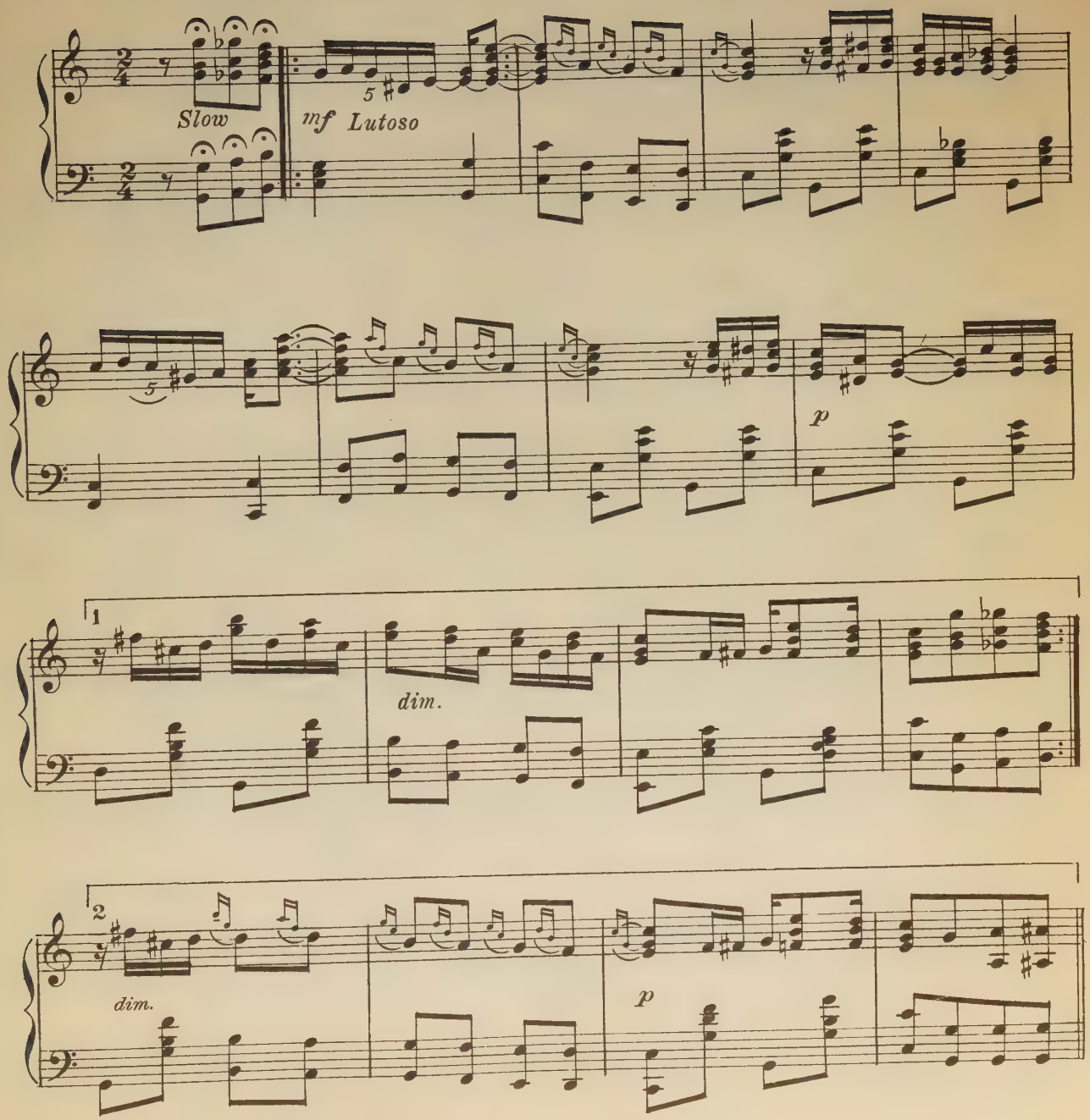

— You'll nev - er miss Joe Tur - ner till he says "Good
— Spent all my mon - ey, now you call Joe Tur - ner
— And then I get my gui - tar, play the blues all
Bye."
"Cheap."
day.
Sweet Babe, I'm goin' to leave you,
You nev - er 'pre - ci - ate the
Now if your heart beat like mine
and the time ain't long,
lit - tle things I do,
it's not made of steel,
No, the time ain't long.
Not one thing I do.
No, tain't made of steel.
If you don't
And that's the
And when you


b'lieve I'm leav - in' count the days I'm gone. You will be
ver - y rea - son why I'm leav - in' you. You will be
learn I left you this is how you'll feel. You will feel
CHORUS
Humming
sor - ry, be sor - ry from your heart, (uhm)
Humming
(uhm) Sor - ry to your heart, (uhm)
(uhm) Some day when you and I must part.


And ev - 'ry time you hear a whis - tle
blow, Hear a
steam - boat blow, You'll hate the
day you lost your Joe. You will be
1.
2.

THE SNAKEY BLUES

WILL NASH



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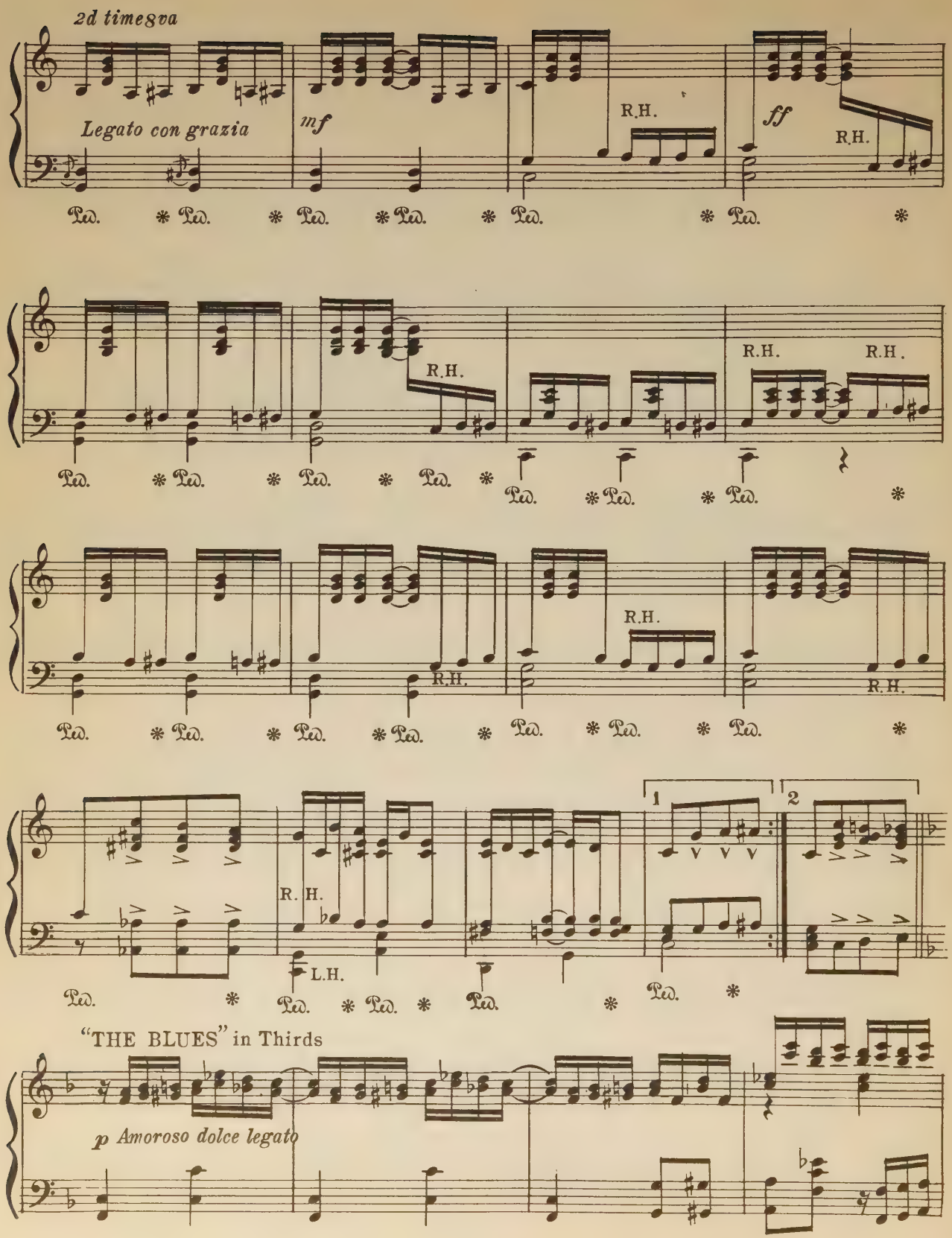
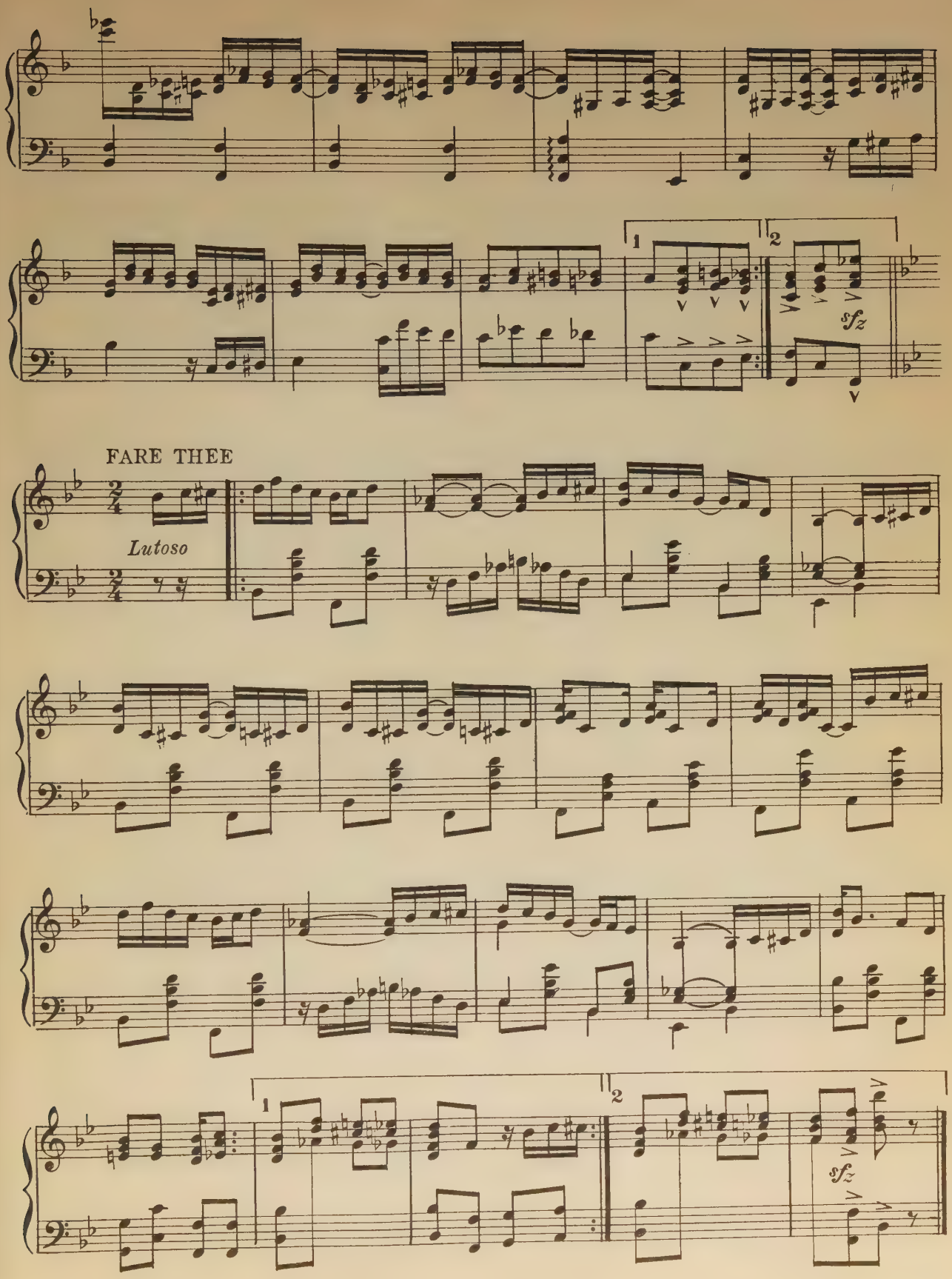
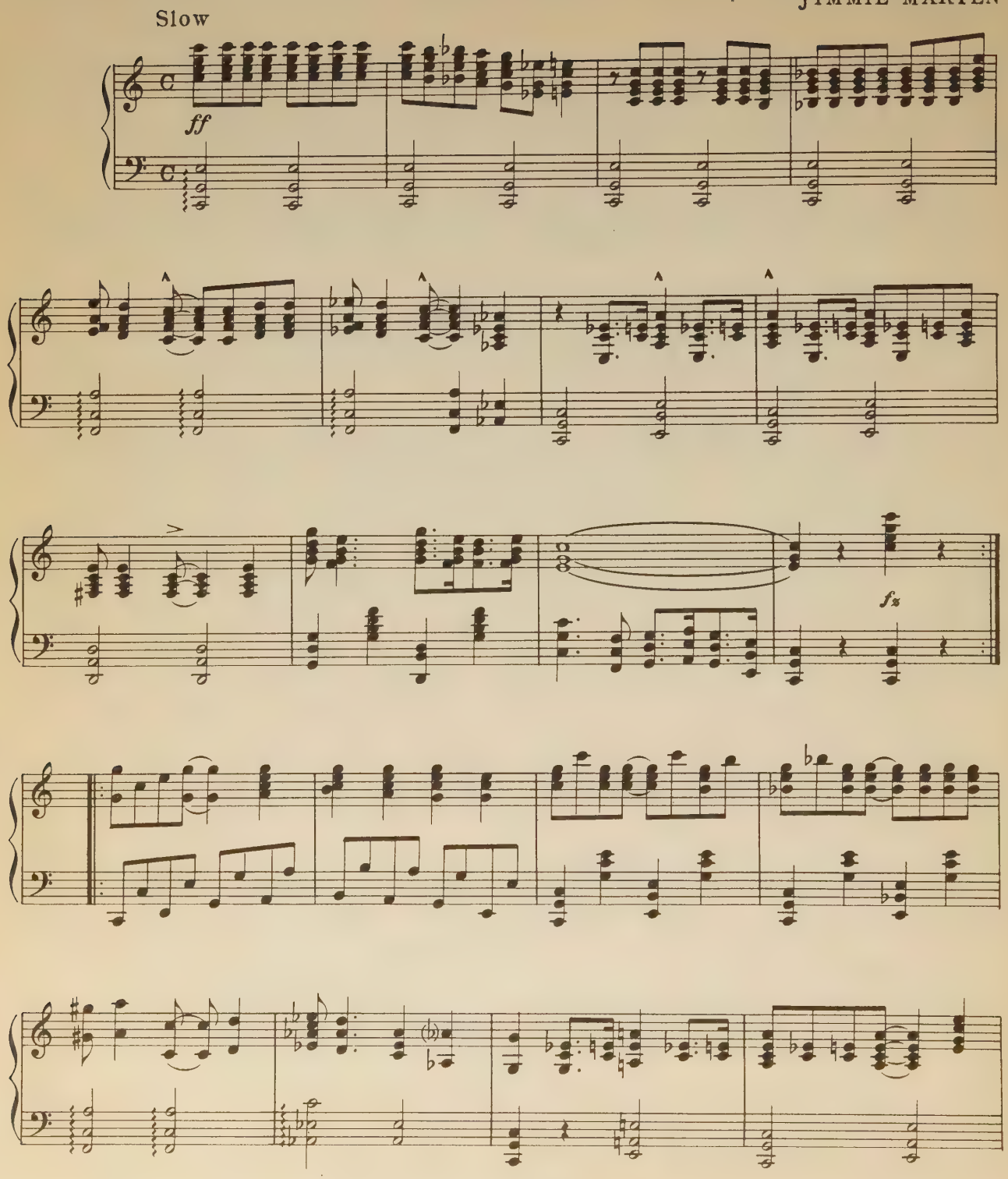

2d time 8va
Legato con grazia
mf
R.H.
ff
R.H.
Ped.
R.H.
R.H.
R.H.
R.H.
R.H.
R.H.
R.H.
1
2
L.H.
"THE BLUES" in Thirds
p Amoroso dolce legato


1
2
sfz
FARE THEE
Lutoso
1
2
sfz

RICE HOTEL BLUES

Words and Music by
JIMMIE MARTEN



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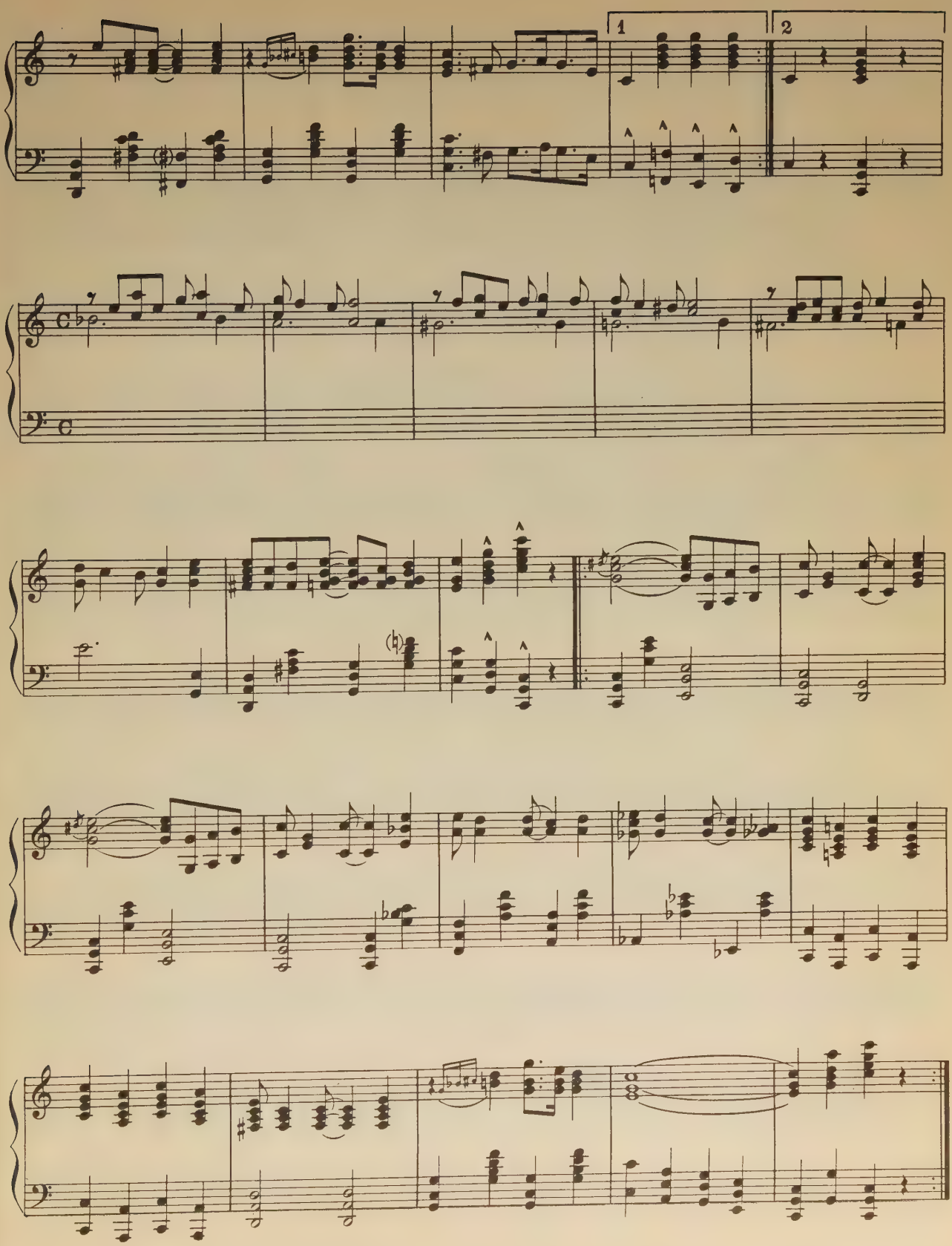
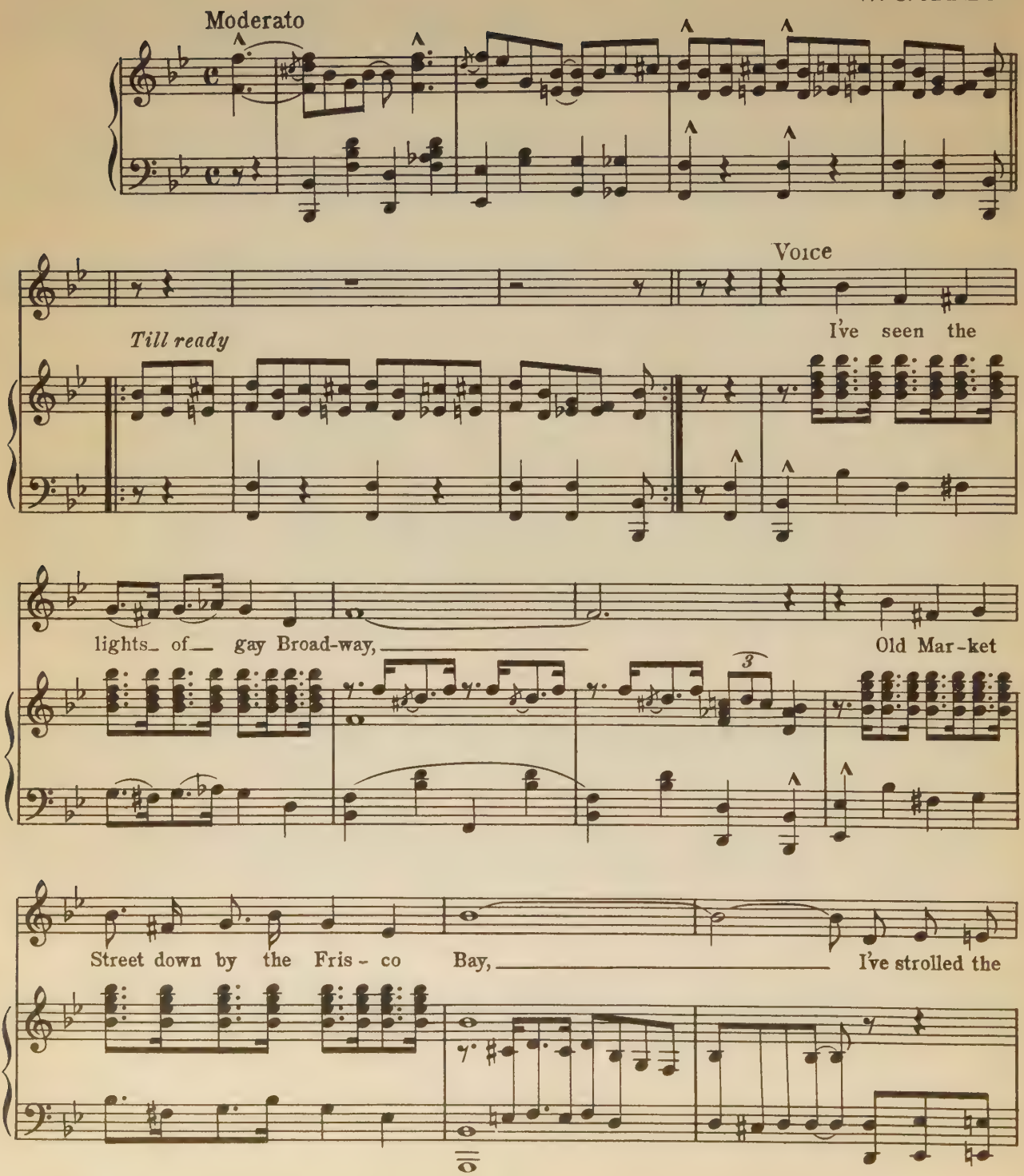

1
2

BEALE STREET BLUES

Words and Music by
W. C. HANDY



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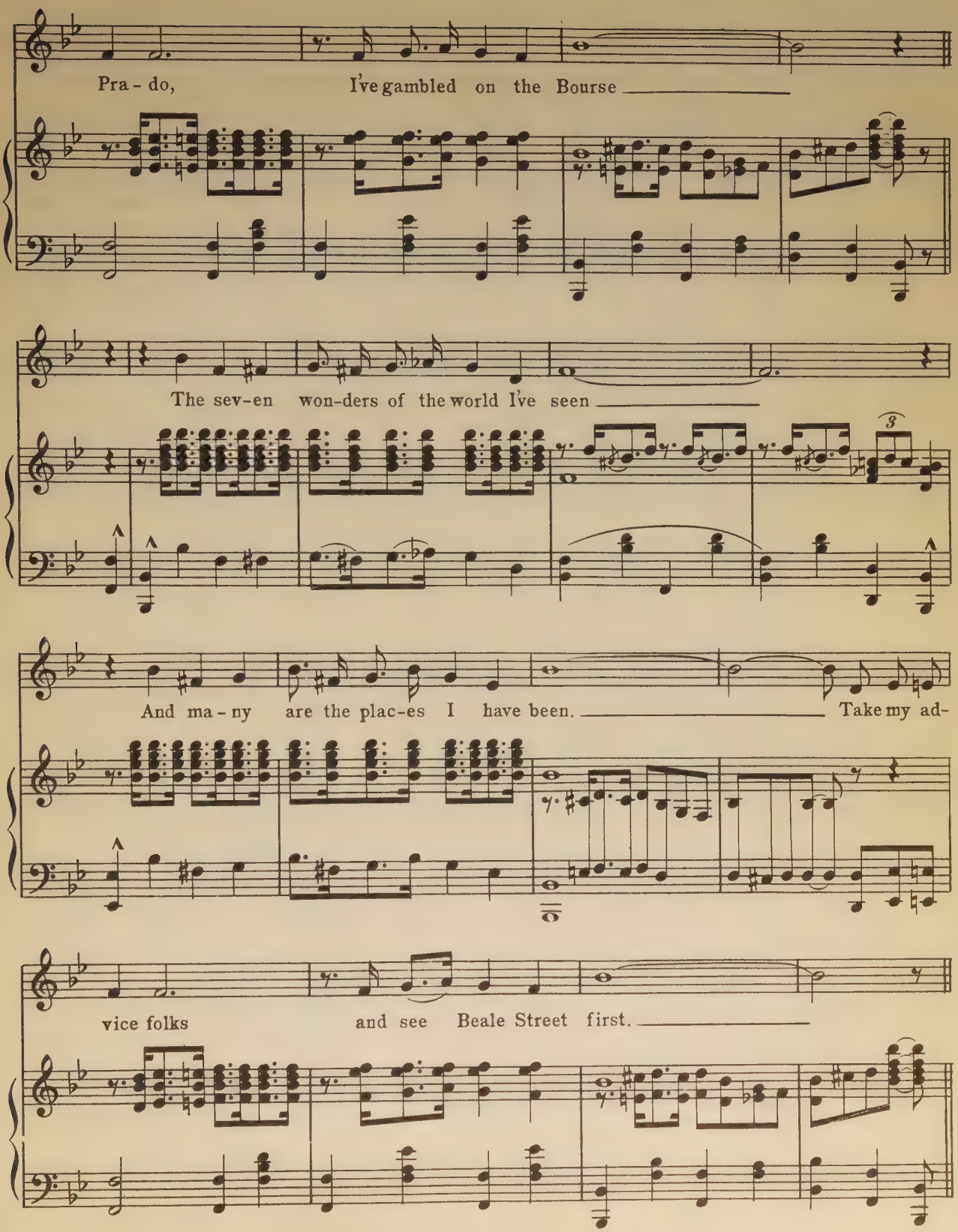
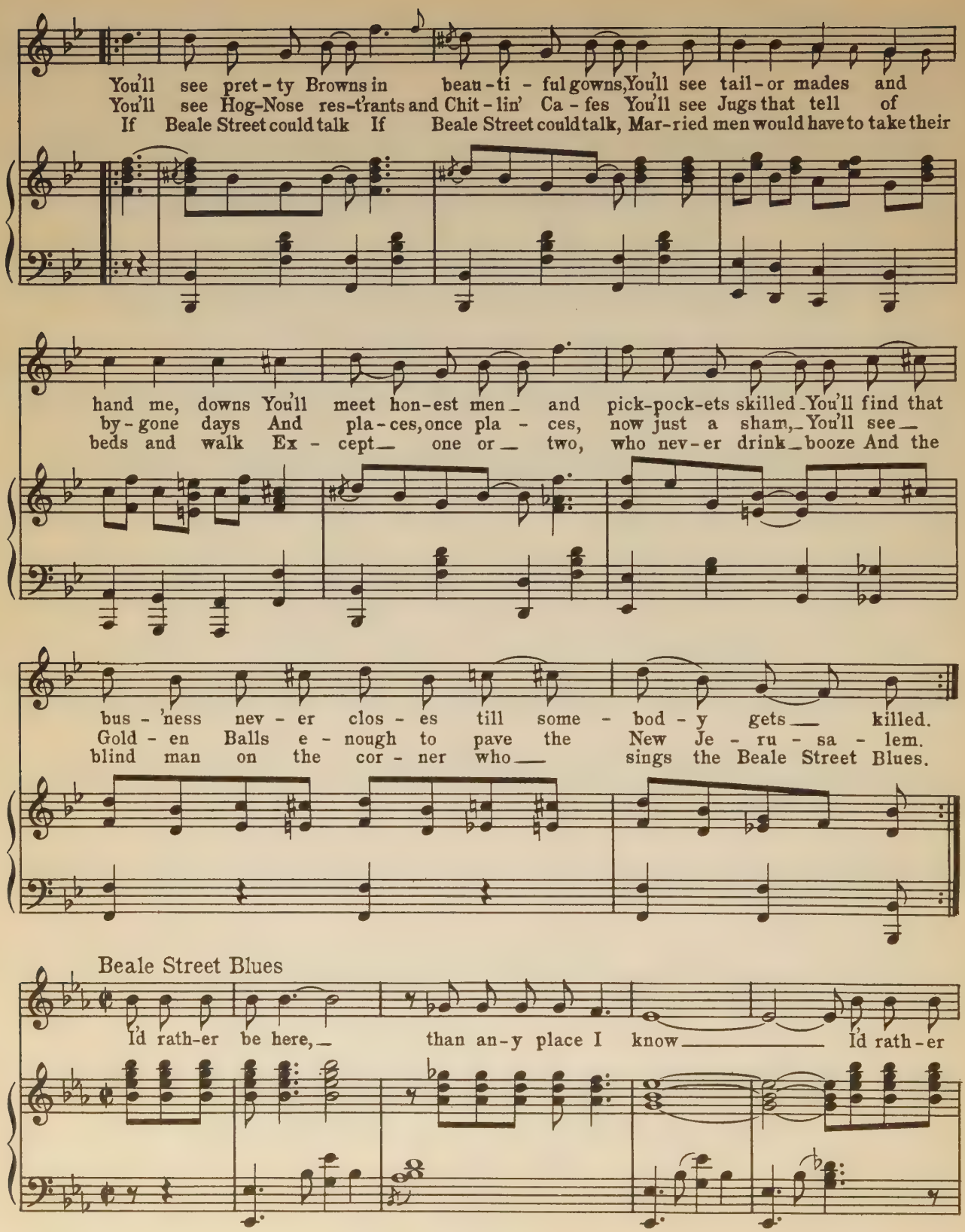
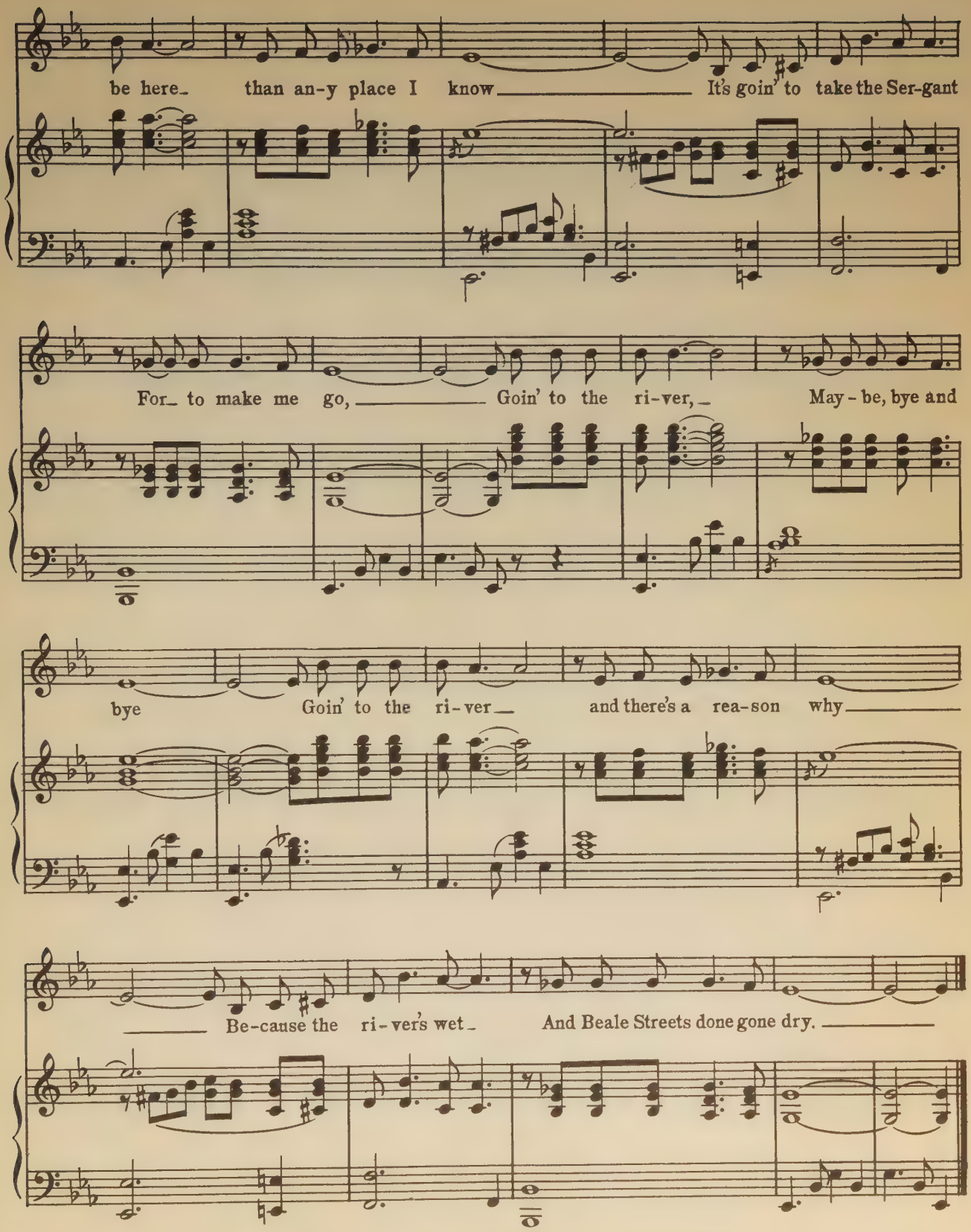
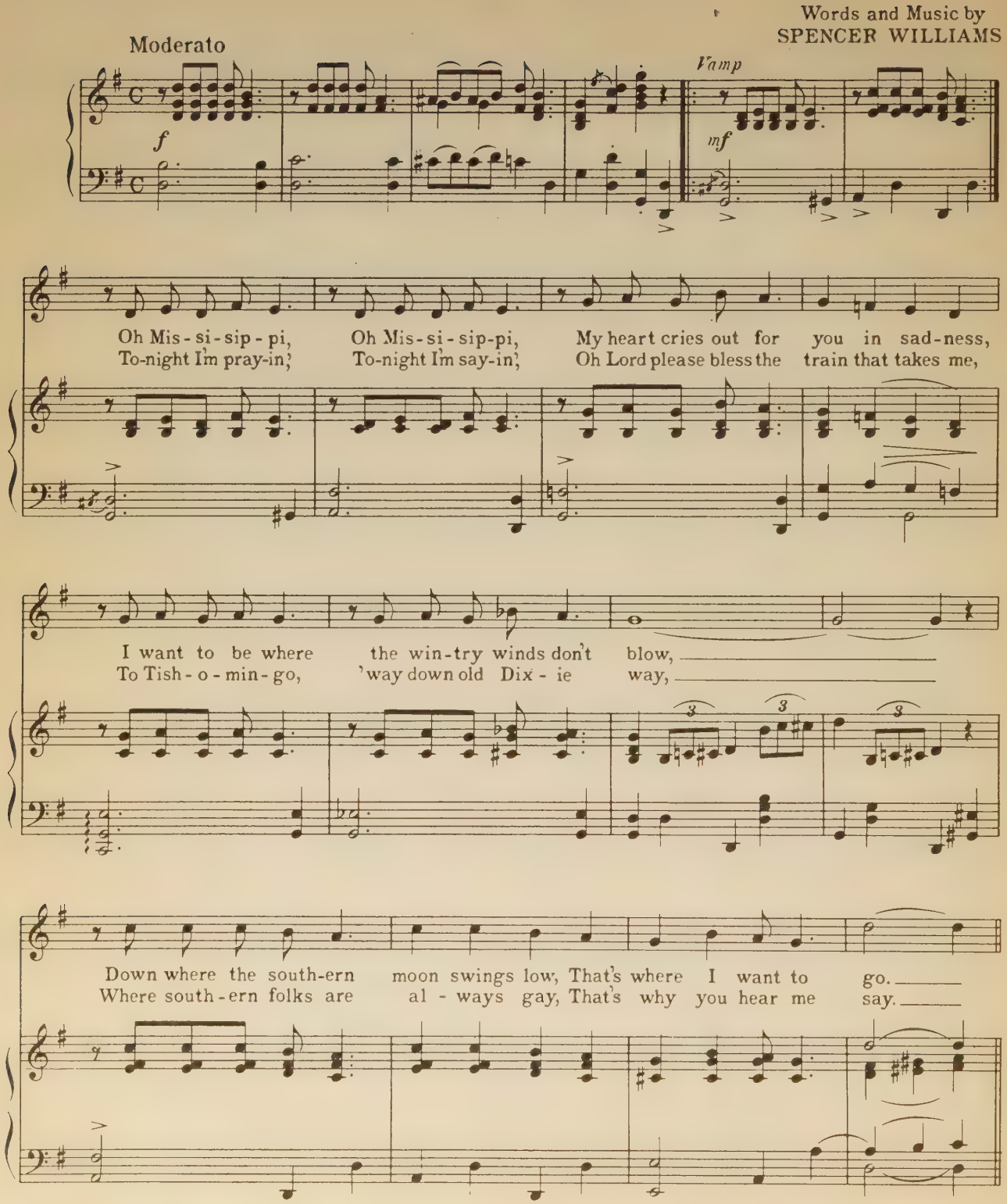

Pra - do, I've gambled on the Bourse
The sev-en won-ders of the world I've seen
3
And ma - ny are the plac-es I have been. Take my ad-
vice folks and see Beale Street first.


You'll see pret-ty Browns in beau-ti-ful gowns, You'll see tail-or mades and
You'll see Hog-Nose res-t'rants and Chit-lin' Ca-fes You'll see Jugs that tell of
If Beale Street could talk If Beale Street could talk, Mar-ried men would have to take their
hand me, downs You'll meet hon-est men and pick-pock-ets skilled You'll find that
by-gone days And pla-ces, once pla-ces, now just a sham, You'll see
beds and walk Ex-cept one or two, who nev-er drink booze And the
bus-'ness nev-er clos-es till some-bod-y gets killed.
Gold-en Balls e-nough to pave the New Je-ru-sa-lem.
blind man on the cor-ner who sings the Beale Street Blues.
Beale Street Blues
I'd rath-er be here, than an-y place I know I'd rath-er


be here_ than an-y place I know_____ It's goin' to take the Ser-gant
For_ to make me go,_____ Goin' to the ri-ver,_ May-be, bye and
bye Goin' to the ri-ver_ and there's a rea-son why_____
_____ Be-cause the ri-ver's wet_ And Beale Streets done gone dry._____

TISHOMINGO BLUES

Words and Music by
SPENCER WILLIAMS


Moderato
f
Vamp
mf
Oh Mis-si-sip-pi, To-night I'm pray-in';
Oh Mis-si-sip-pi, To-night I'm say-in';
My heart cries out for you in sad-ness, Oh Lord please bless the train that takes me,
I want to be where To Tish-o-min-go,
the win-try winds don't 'way down old Dix-ie
blow, way,
3
Down where the south-ern Where south-ern folks are
moon swings low, That's where I want to go. al-ways gay, That's why you hear me say.

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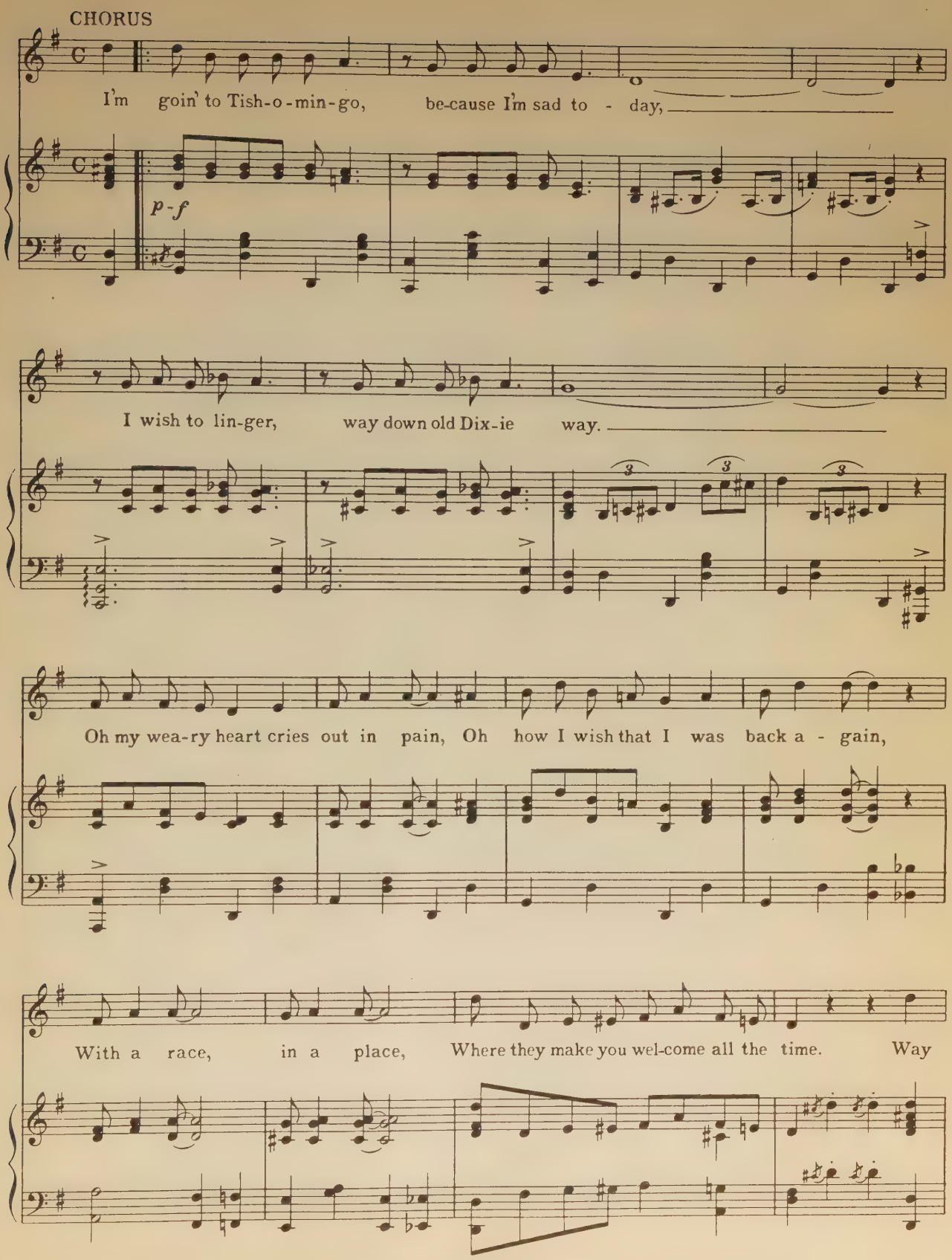
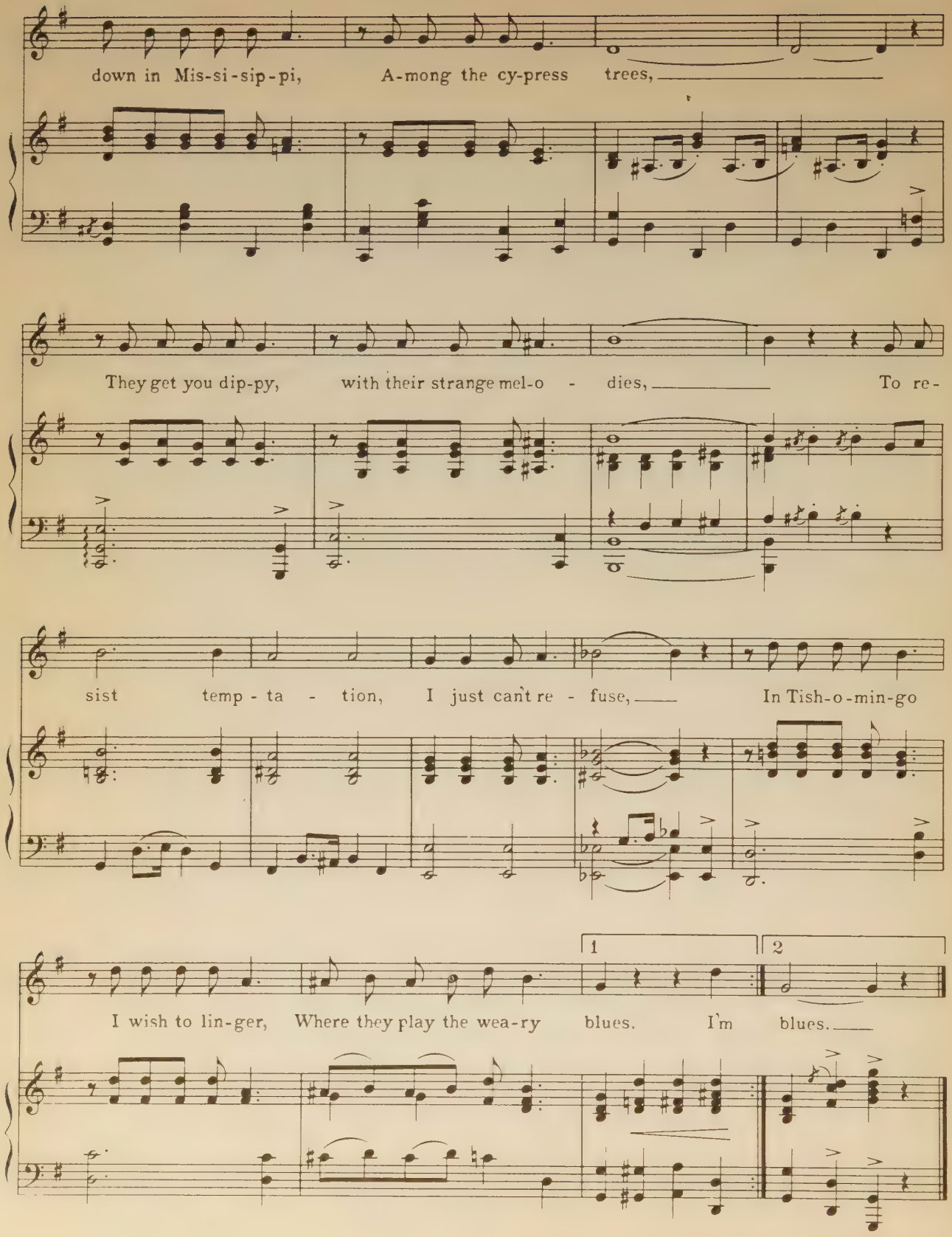
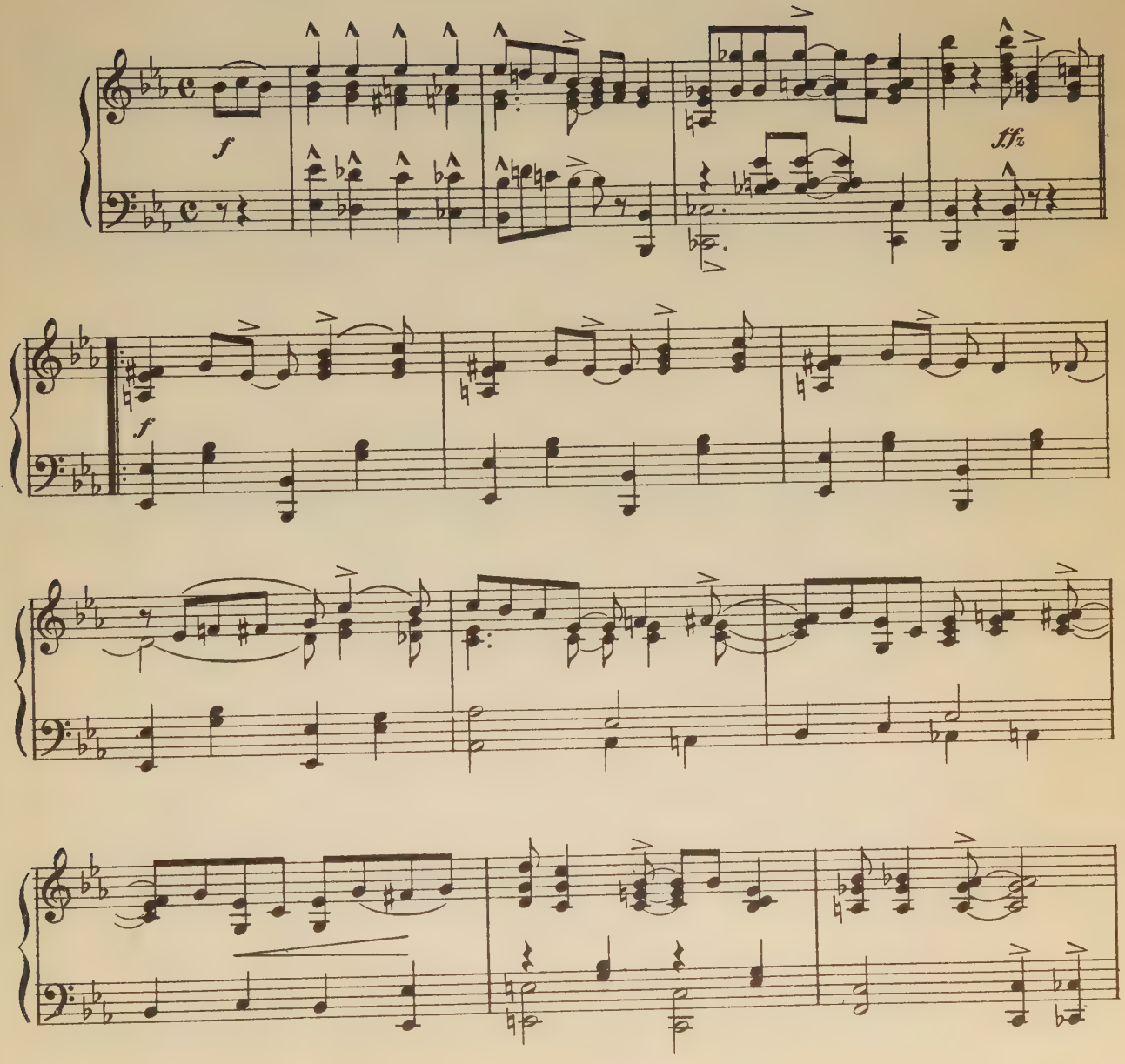

CHORUS
I'm goin' to Tish-o-min-go, be-cause I'm sad to - day,
p-f
I wish to lin-ger, way down old Dix-ie way.
Oh my wea-ry heart cries out in pain, Oh how I wish that I was back a - gain,
With a race, in a place, Where they make you wel-come all the time. Way


down in Mis-si-sip-pi, A-mong the cy-press trees,
They get you dip-py, with their strange mel-o - dies, To re-
sist temp - ta - tion, I just can't re - fuse, In Tish-o-min-go
1
2
I wish to lin-ger, Where they play the wea-ry blues. I'm blues.

BARNYARD BLUES
(LIVERY STABLE BLUES)

By D. J. LA ROCCA



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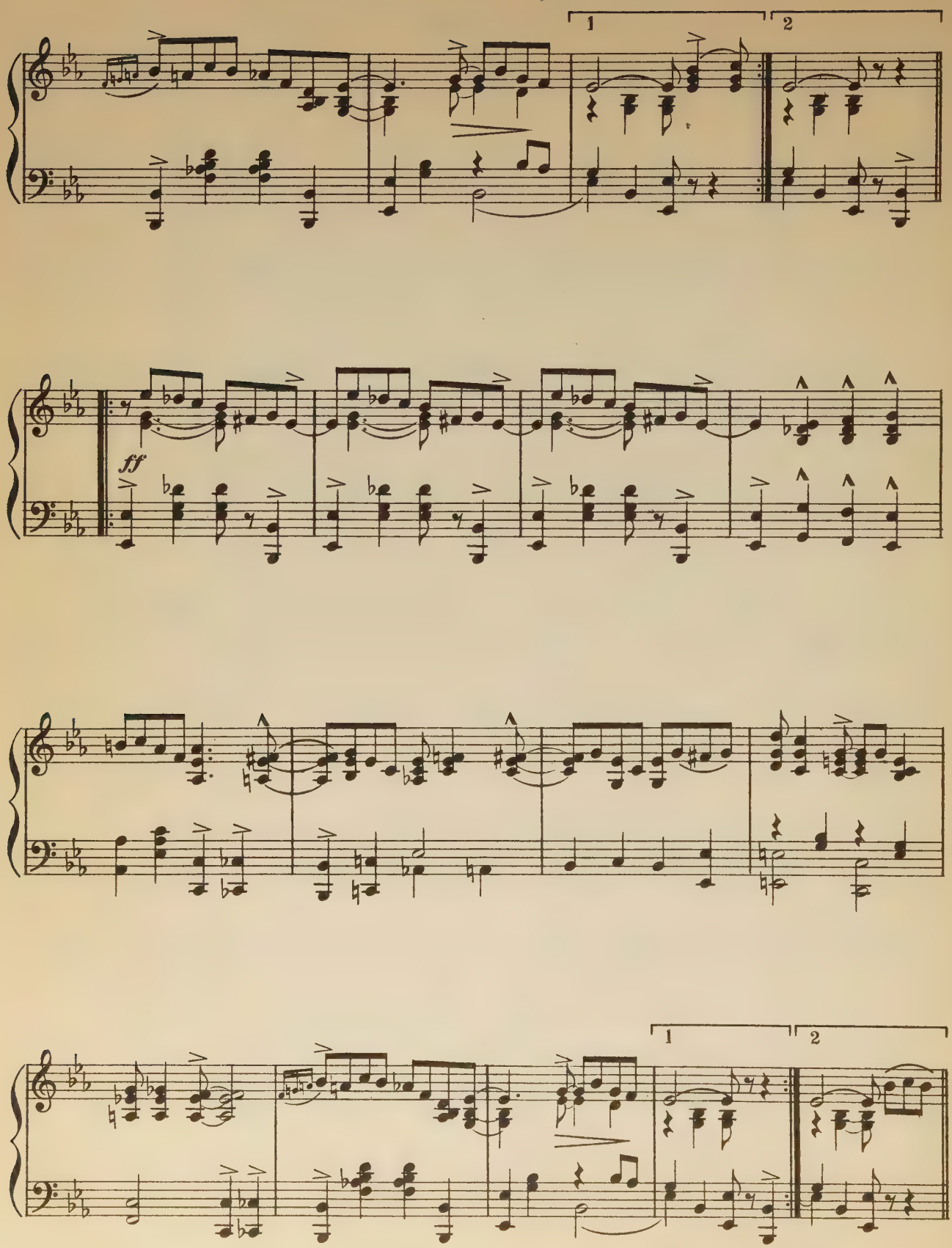
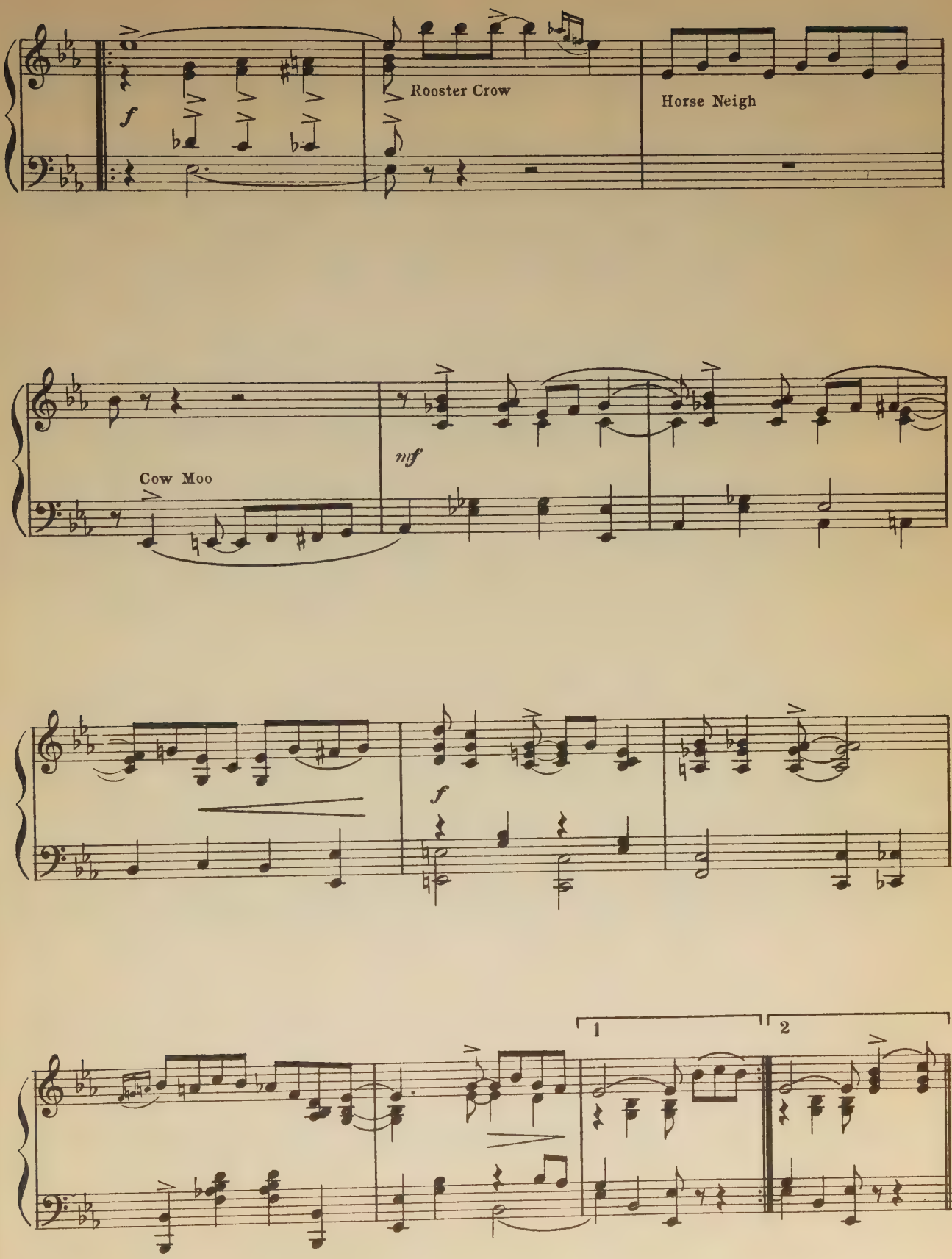
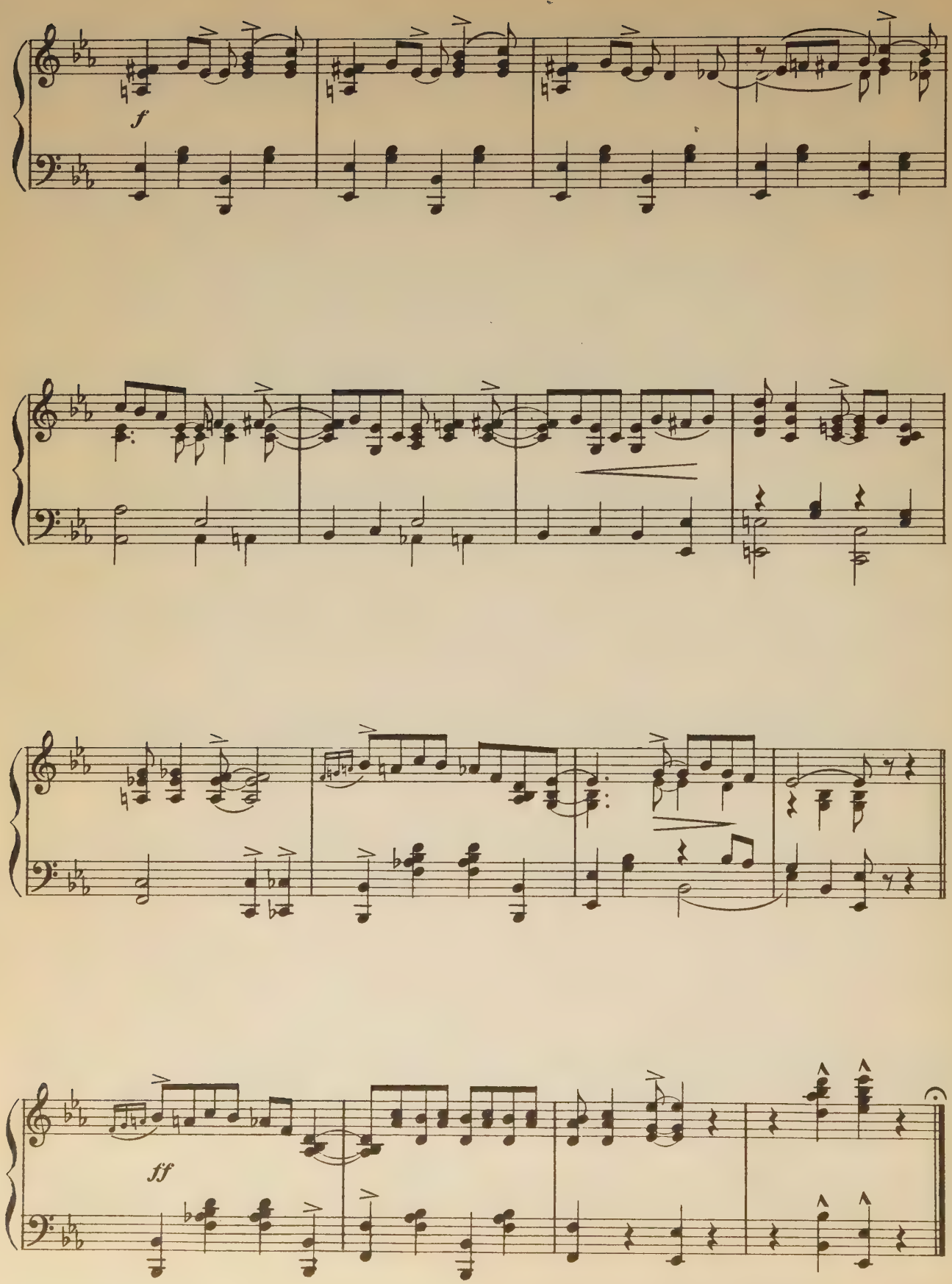
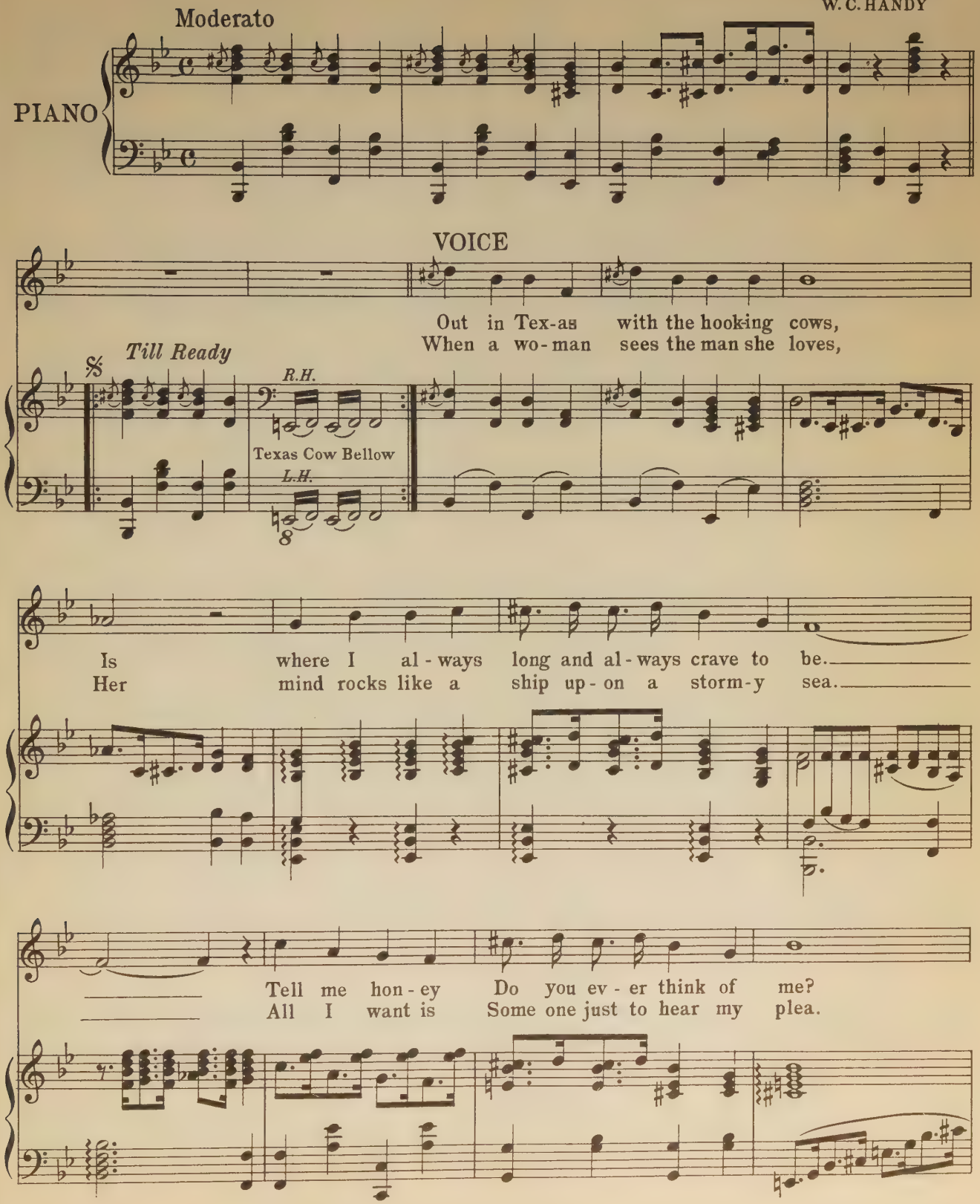

1
2
ff
1
2


f
Rooster Crow
Horse Neigh
Cow Moo
mf
f
1
2


f
ff

HOOKING COW BLUES

Words and Music by
DOUGLASS WILLIAMS
Jazz & Blues Music by
W. C. HANDY


Moderato
PIANO
VOICE
Out in Tex-as with the hooking cows,
When a wo-man sees the man she loves,
Till Ready
R.H.
Texas Cow Bellow
L.H.
Is where I al-ways long and al-ways crave to be.
Her mind rocks like a ship up-on a storm-y sea.
Tell me hon-ey Do you ev-er think of me?
All I want is Some one just to hear my plea.

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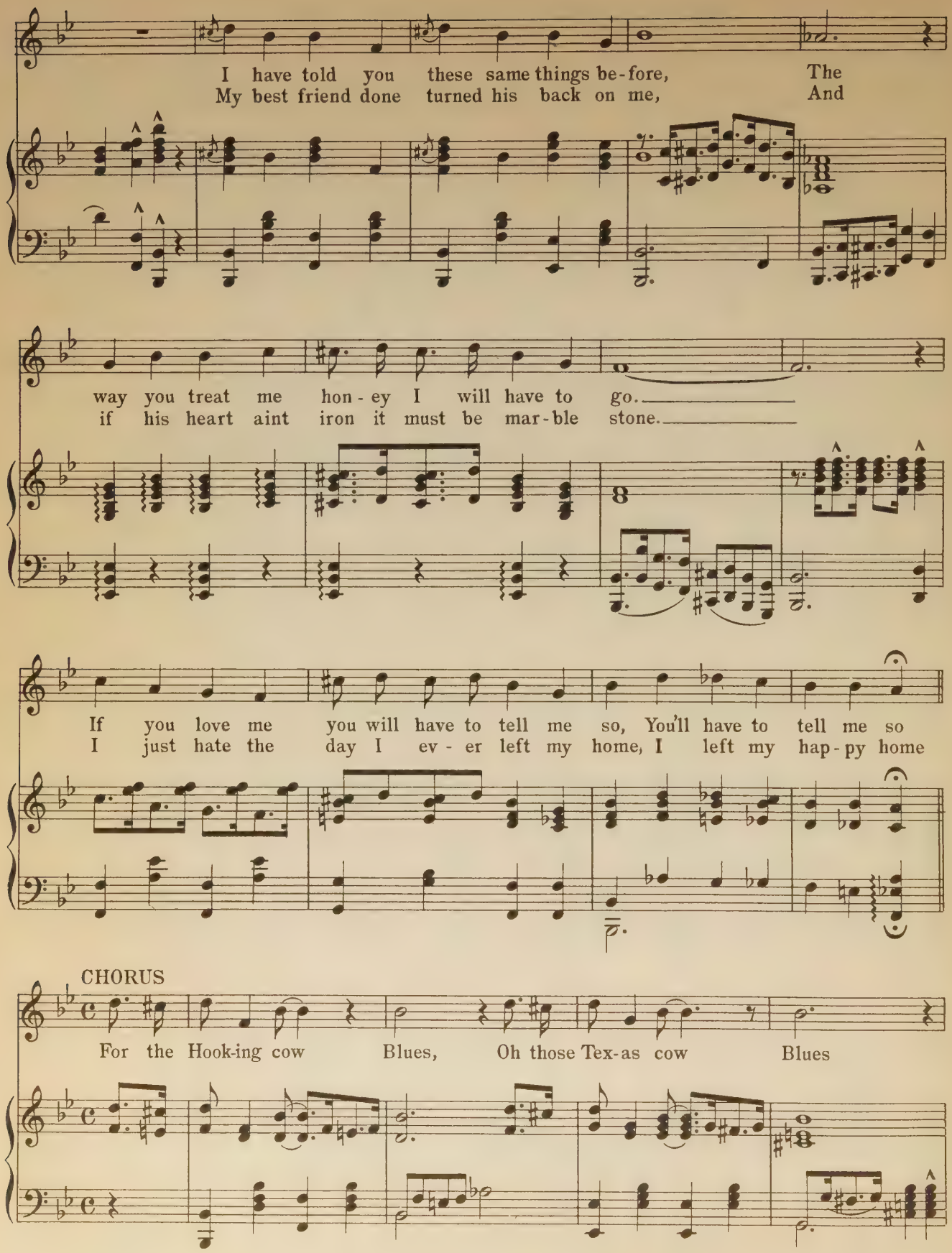
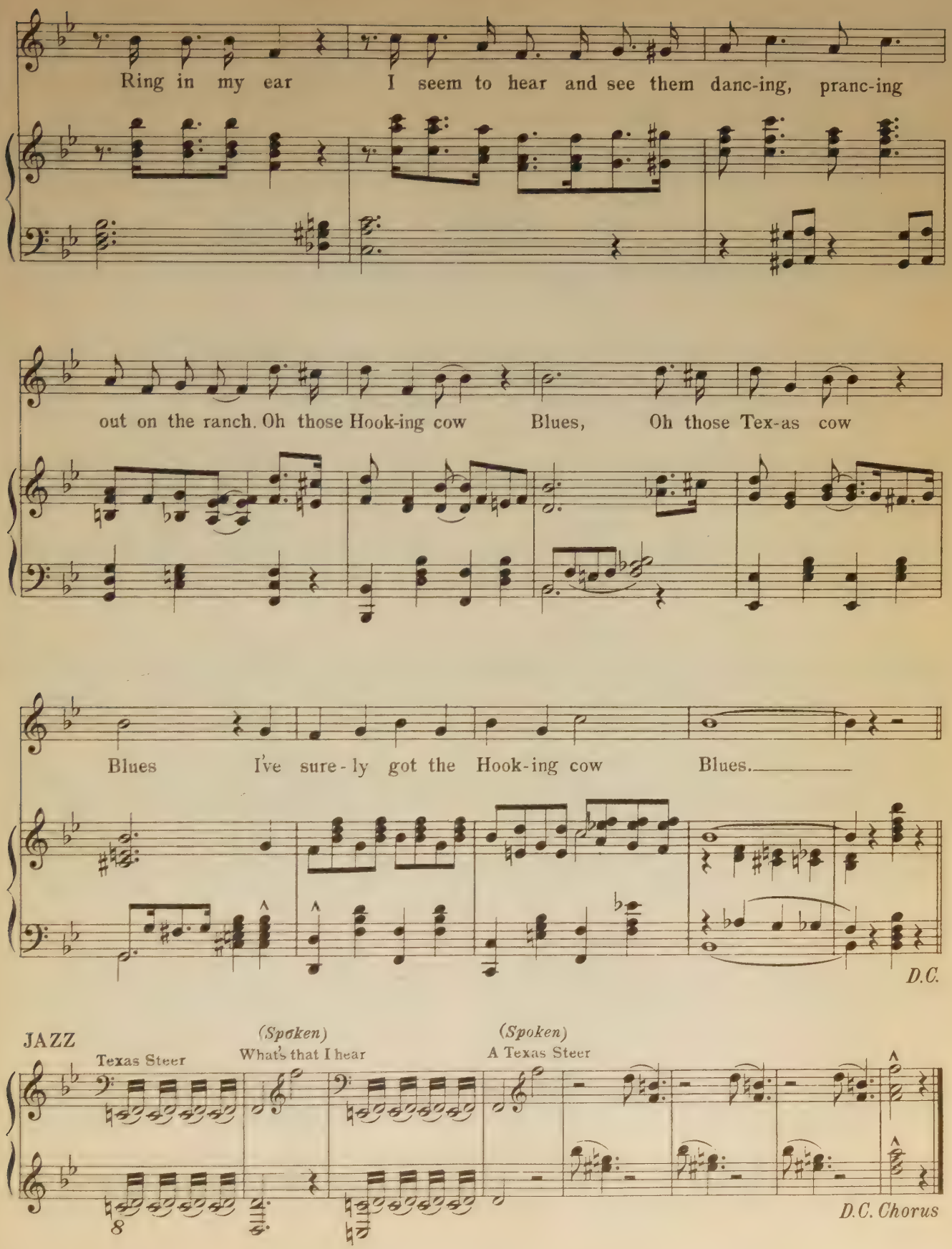
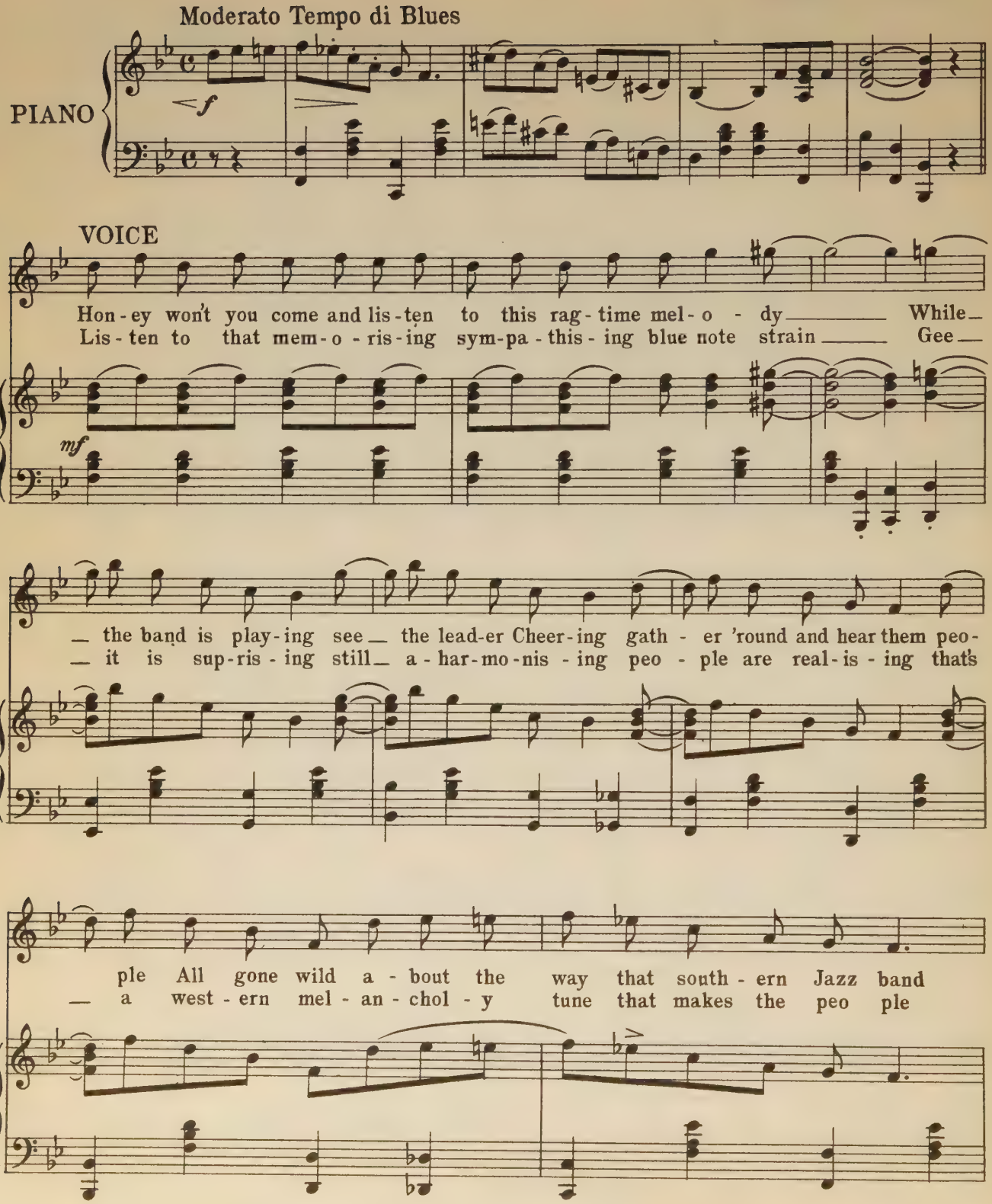

I have told you these same things be-fore, The
My best friend done turned his back on me, And
way you treat me hon-ey I will have to go.
if his heart aint iron it must be mar-ble stone.
If you love me you will have to tell me so, You'll have to tell me so
I just hate the day I ev-er left my home, I left my hap-py home
CHORUS
For the Hook-ing cow Blues, Oh those Tex-as cow Blues


Ring in my ear I seem to hear and see them danc-ing, pranc-ing
out on the ranch. Oh those Hook-ing cow Blues, Oh those Tex-as cow
Blues I've sure-ly got the Hook-ing cow Blues.
D.C.
JAZZ
Texas Steer
(Spoken)
What's that I hear
(Spoken)
A Texas Steer
D.C. Chorus

WEST TEXAS BLUES

CHAS. H. BOOKER Jr.


Moderato Tempo di Blues
PIANO
f
VOICE
Hon-ey won't you come and lis-ten to this rag-time mel-o-dy While
Lis-ten to that mem-o-ris-ing sym-pa-this-ing blue note strain Gee
mf
the band is play-ing see the lead-er Cheer-ing gath-er 'round and hear them peo-
it is sup-ris-ing still a-har-mo-nis-ing peo-ple are real-is-ing that's
ple All gone wild a-bout the way that south-ern Jazz band
a west-ern mel-an-chol-y tune that makes the peo ple

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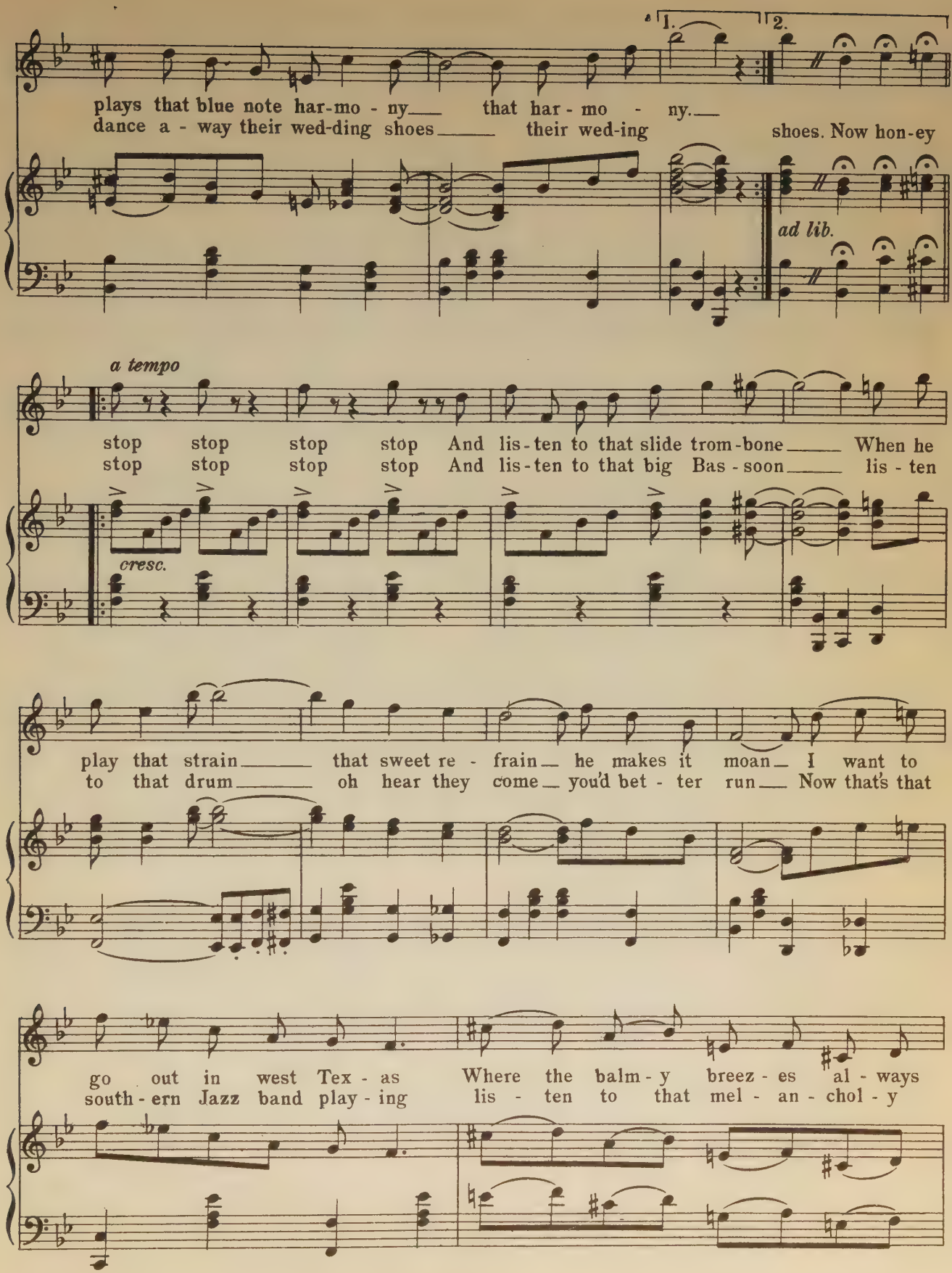
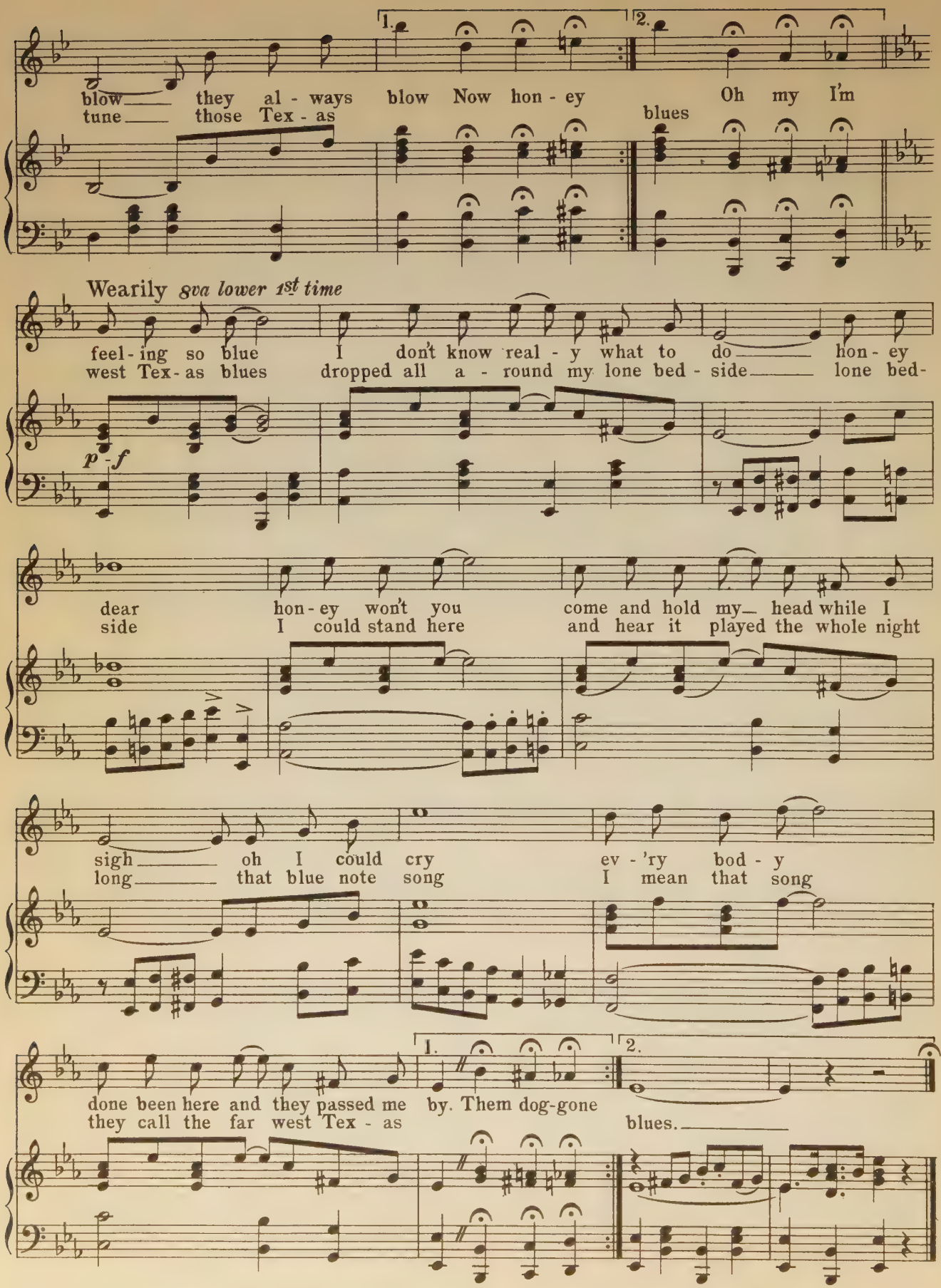
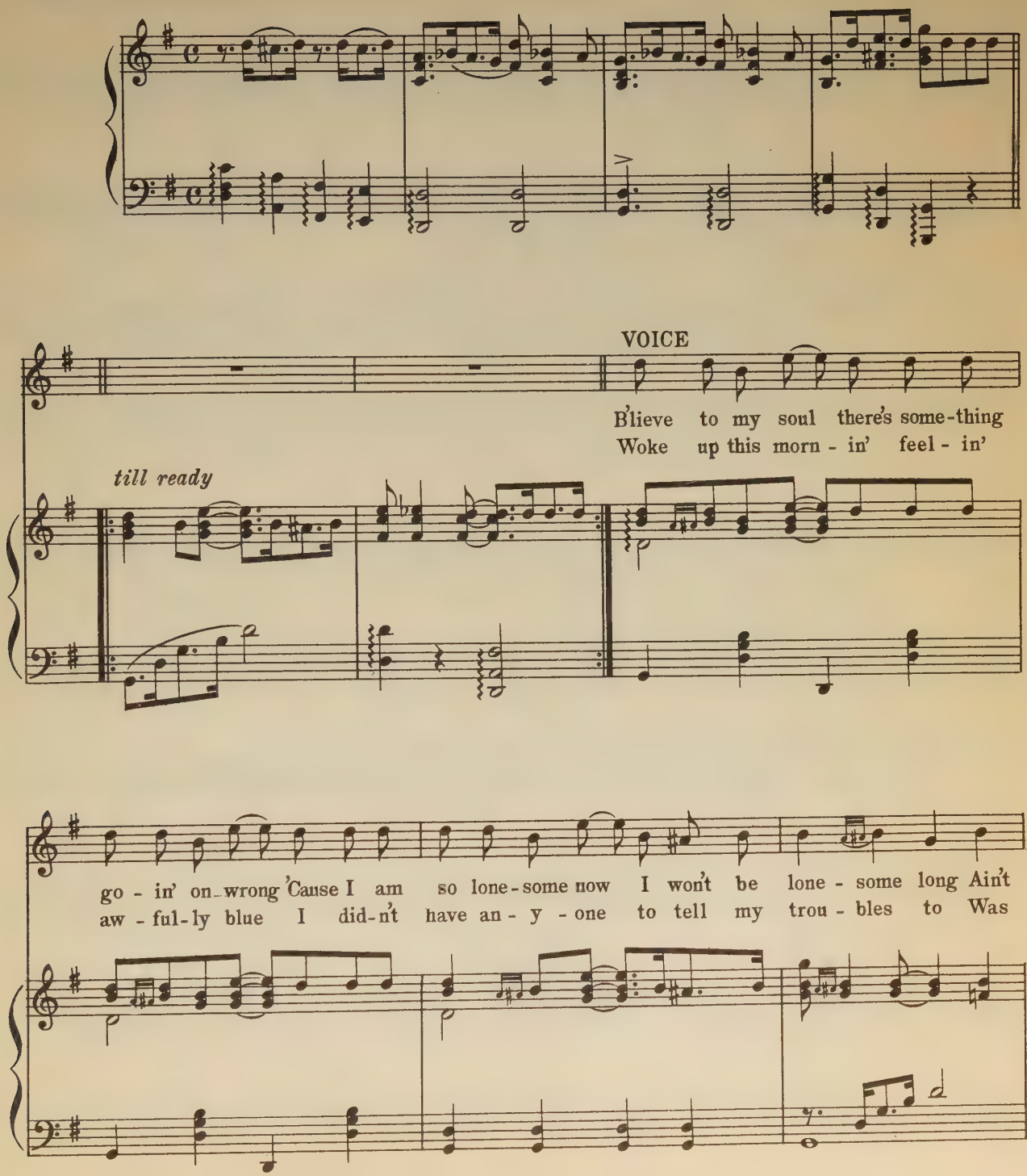

1.
2.
plays that blue note har-mo - ny___ that har - mo - ny.___
dance a - way their wed-ding shoes_____ their wed-ing shoes. Now hon-ey
ad lib.
a tempo
stop stop stop stop And lis-ten to that slide trom-bone_____ When he
stop stop stop stop And lis-ten to that big Bas - soon_____ lis - ten
cresc.
play that strain_____ that sweet re - frain__ he makes it moan__ I want to
to that drum_____ oh hear they come__ you'd bet - ter run___ Now that's that
go out in west Tex - as Where the balm - y breez - es al - ways
south - ern Jazz band play - ing lis - ten to that mel - an - chol - y


1.
2.
blow they al - ways blow Now hon - ey Oh my I'm
tune those Tex - as blues
Wearily 8va lower 1st time
feel - ing so blue I don't know real - y what to do hon - ey
west Tex - as blues dropped all a - round my lone bed - side lone bed -
p - f
dear hon - ey won't you come and hold my head while I
side I could stand here and hear it played the whole night
sigh oh I could cry ev - 'ry bod - y
long that blue note song I mean that song
1.
2.
done been here and they passed me by. Them dog-gone
they call the far west Tex - as blues.

GOIN' DOWN THAT LONG LONG LONESOME ROAD

Words and Music by
WILL NASH


VOICE
B'lieve to my soul there's some-thing
Woke up this morn - in' feel - in'
till ready
go - in' on wrong 'Cause I am so lone-some now I won't be lone - some long Ain't
aw - ful-ly blue I did-n't have an - y - one to tell my trou - bles to Was

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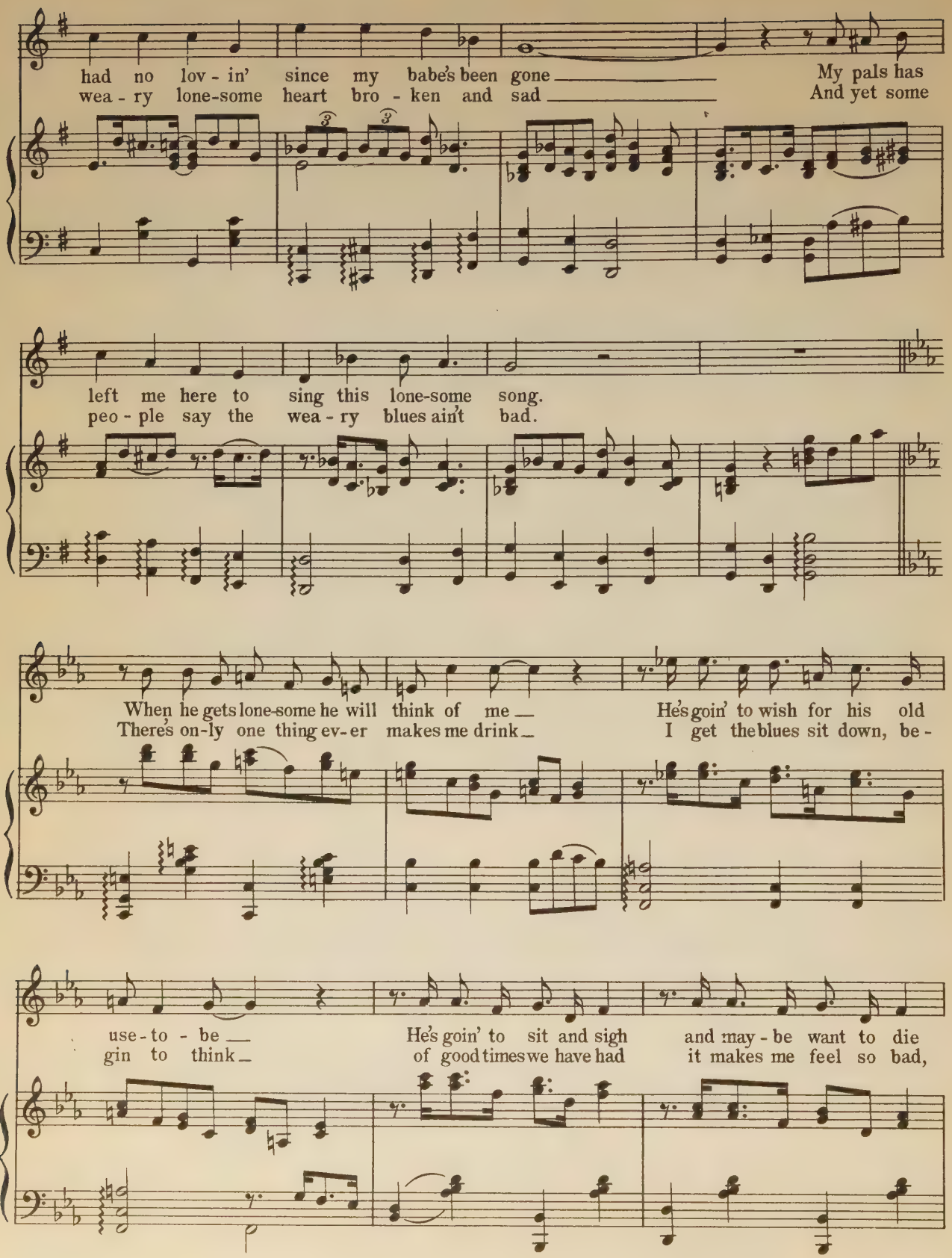
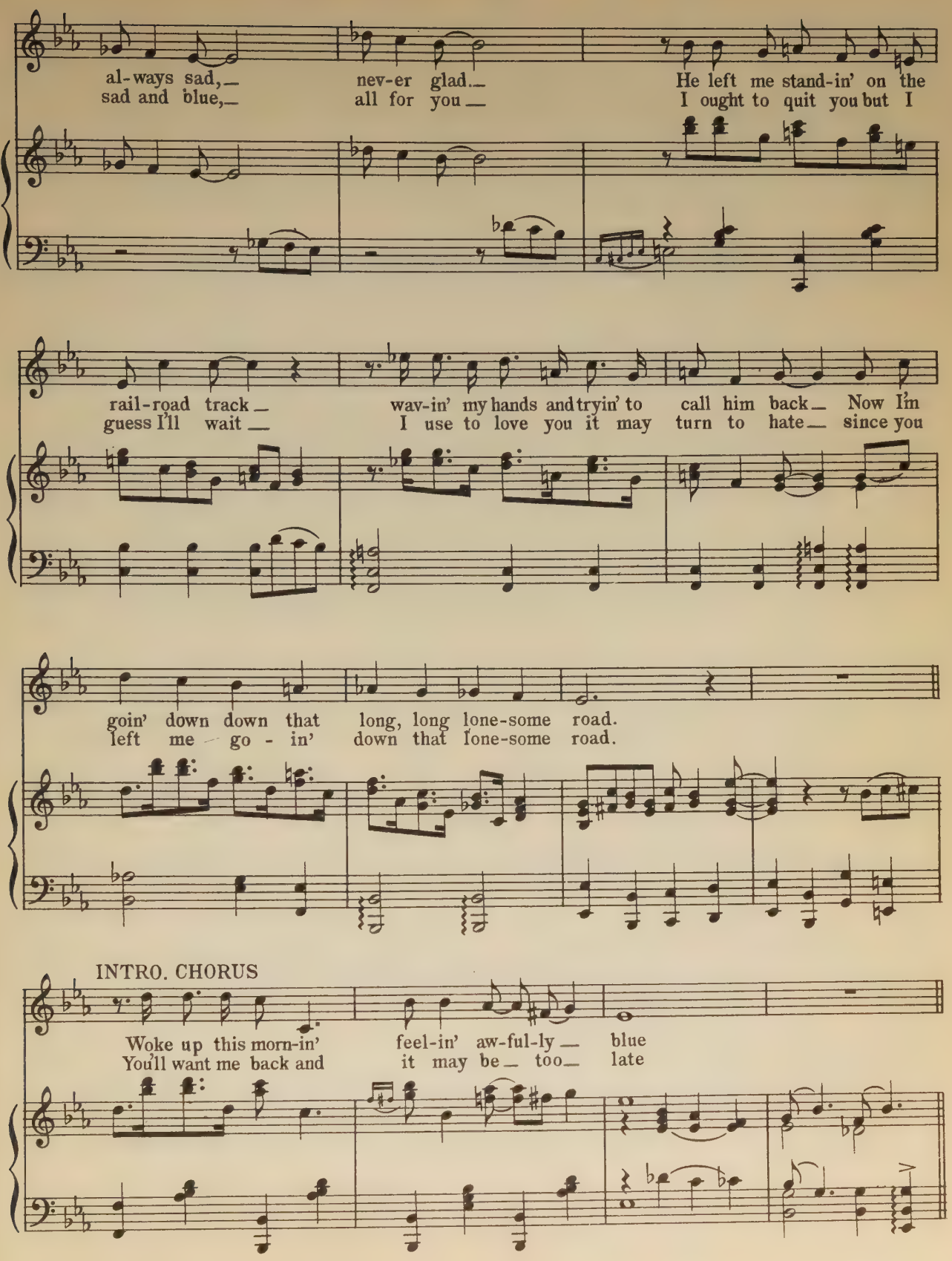
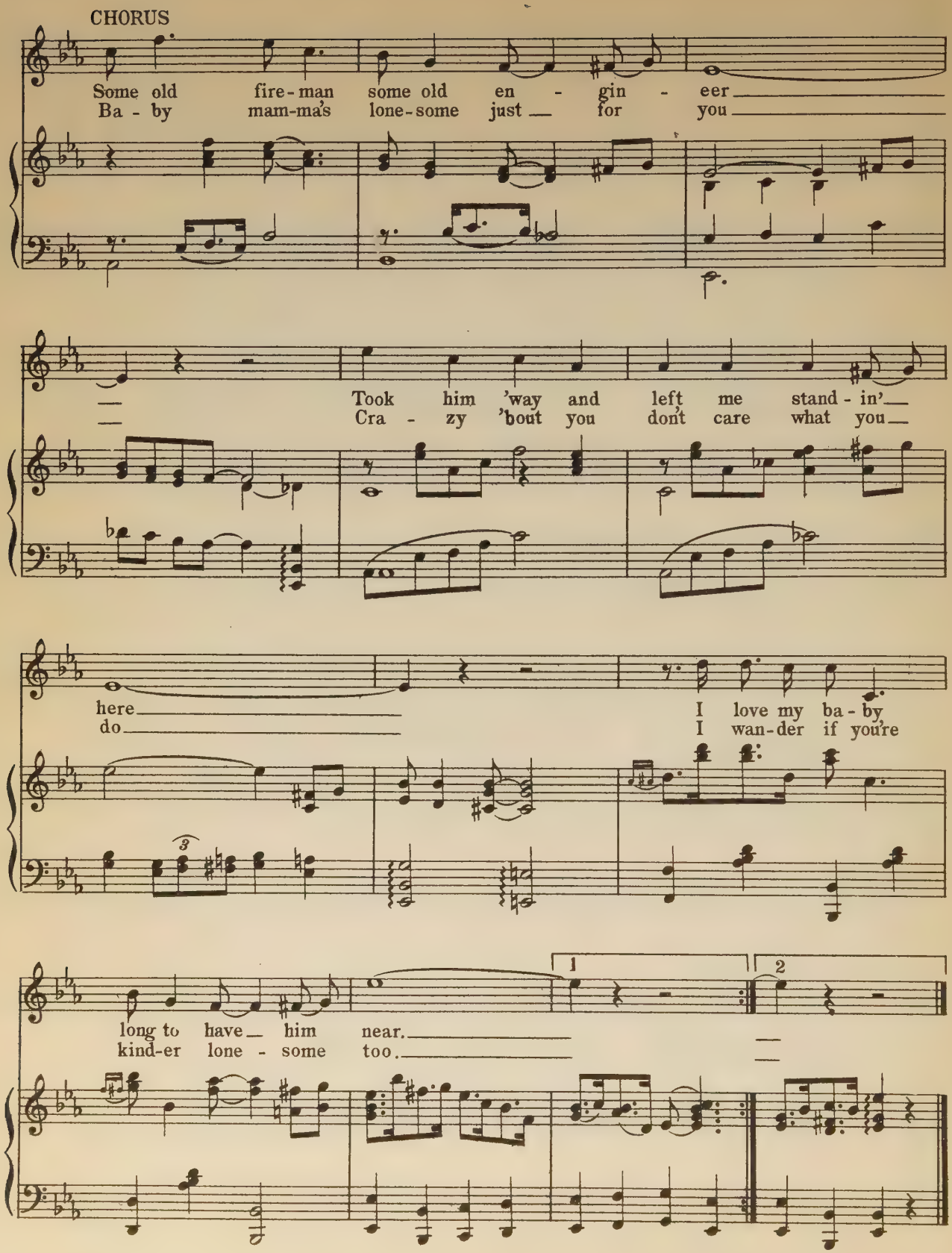

had no lov - in' since my babe's been gone
wea - ry lone-some heart bro - ken and sad
My pals has
And yet some
left me here to sing this lone-some song.
peo - ple say the wea - ry blues ain't bad.
When he gets lone-some he will think of me
There's on-ly one thing ev-er makes me drink
He's goin' to wish for his old
I get the blues sit down, be -
use - to - be
gin to think
He's goin' to sit and sigh
of good times we have had
and may - be want to die
it makes me feel so bad,

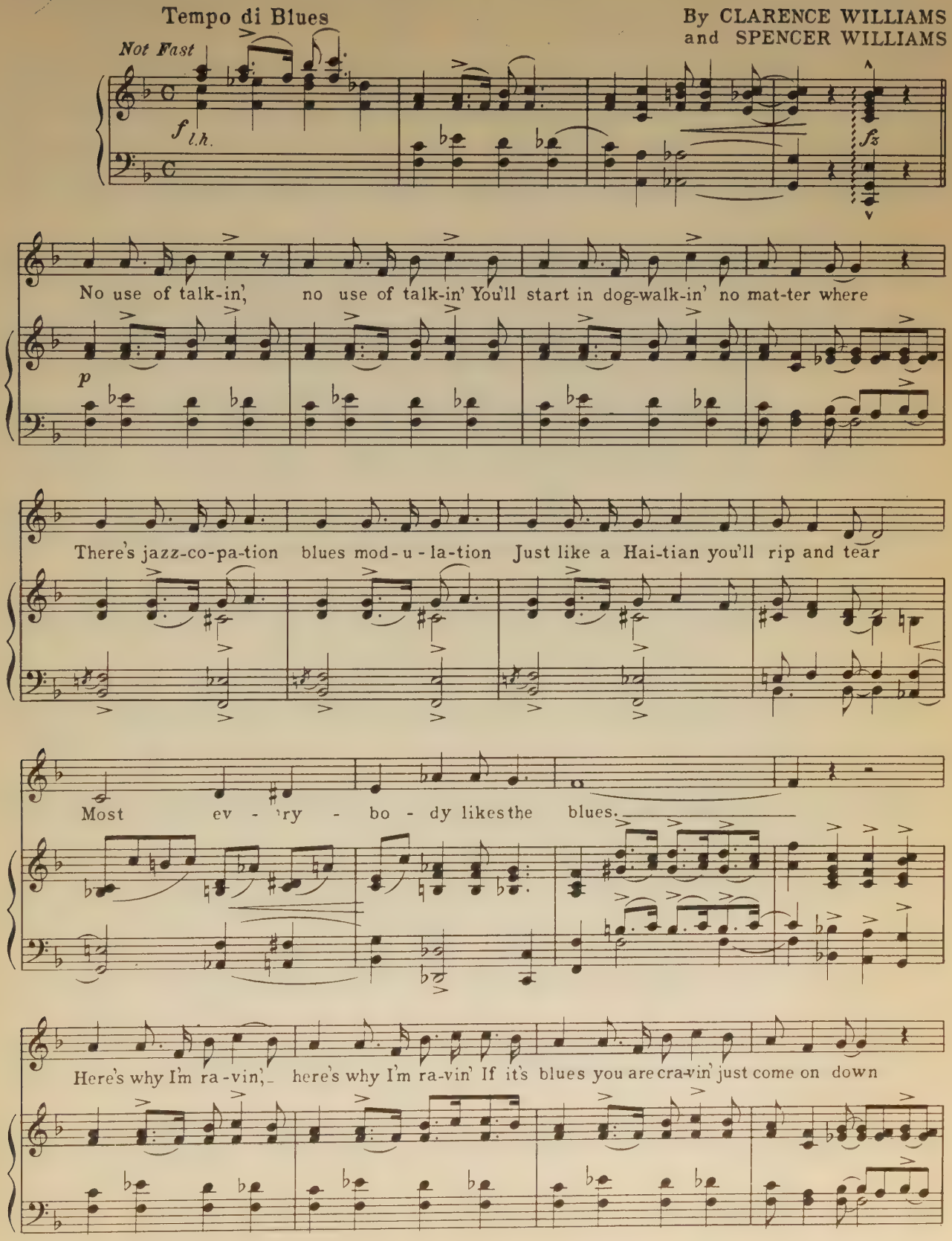

al-ways sad,_ nev-er glad._ He left me stand-in' on the
sad and blue,_ all for you__ I ought to quit you but I
rail-road track_ wav-in' my hands and tryin' to call him back_ Now I'm
guess I'll wait__ I use to love you it may turn to hate__ since you
goin' down down that long, long lone-some road.
left me go - in' down that lone-some road.
INTRO. CHORUS
Woke up this morn-in' feel-in' aw-ful-ly__ blue
You'll want me back and it may be__ too__ late


CHORUS
Some old fire-man some old en - gin - eer
Ba - by mam-ma's lone-some just for you
Took him 'way and left me stand - in'
Cra - zy 'bout you don't care what you
here
do
I love my ba - by
I wan-der if you're
long to have him near.
kind-er lone - some too.
1
2

ROYAL GARDEN BLUES

Tempo di Blues

By CLARENCE WILLIAMS
and SPENCER WILLIAMS


Not Fast
f l.h.
fz
No use of talk-in', no use of talk-in' You'll start in dog-walk-in' no mat-ter where
p
There's jazz-co-pa-tion blues mod-u-la-tion Just like a Hai-tian you'll rip and tear
Most ev - 'ry - bo - dy likesthe blues.
Here's why I'm ra-vin',- here's why I'm ra-vin' If it's blues you are cra-vin' just come on down

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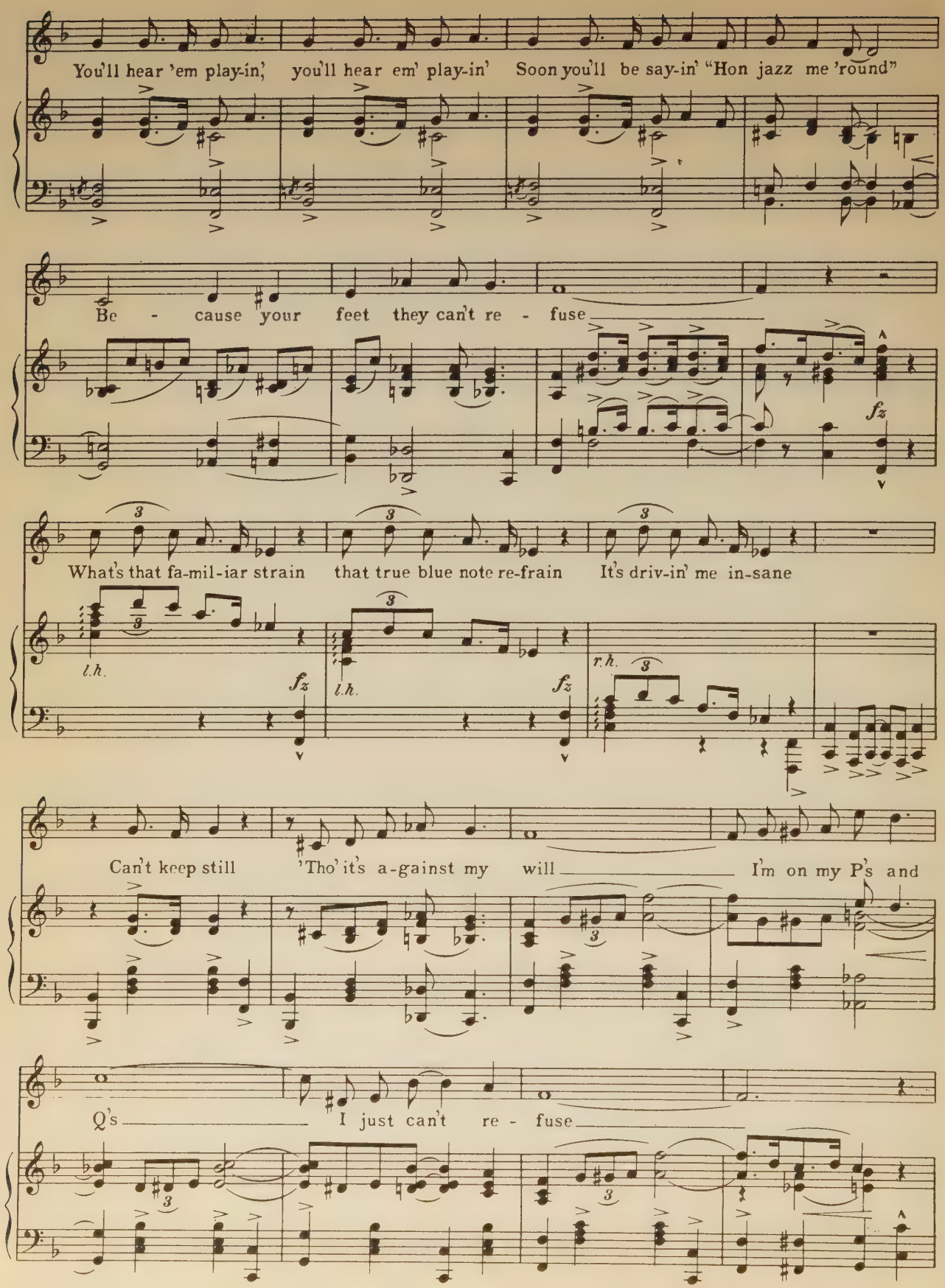
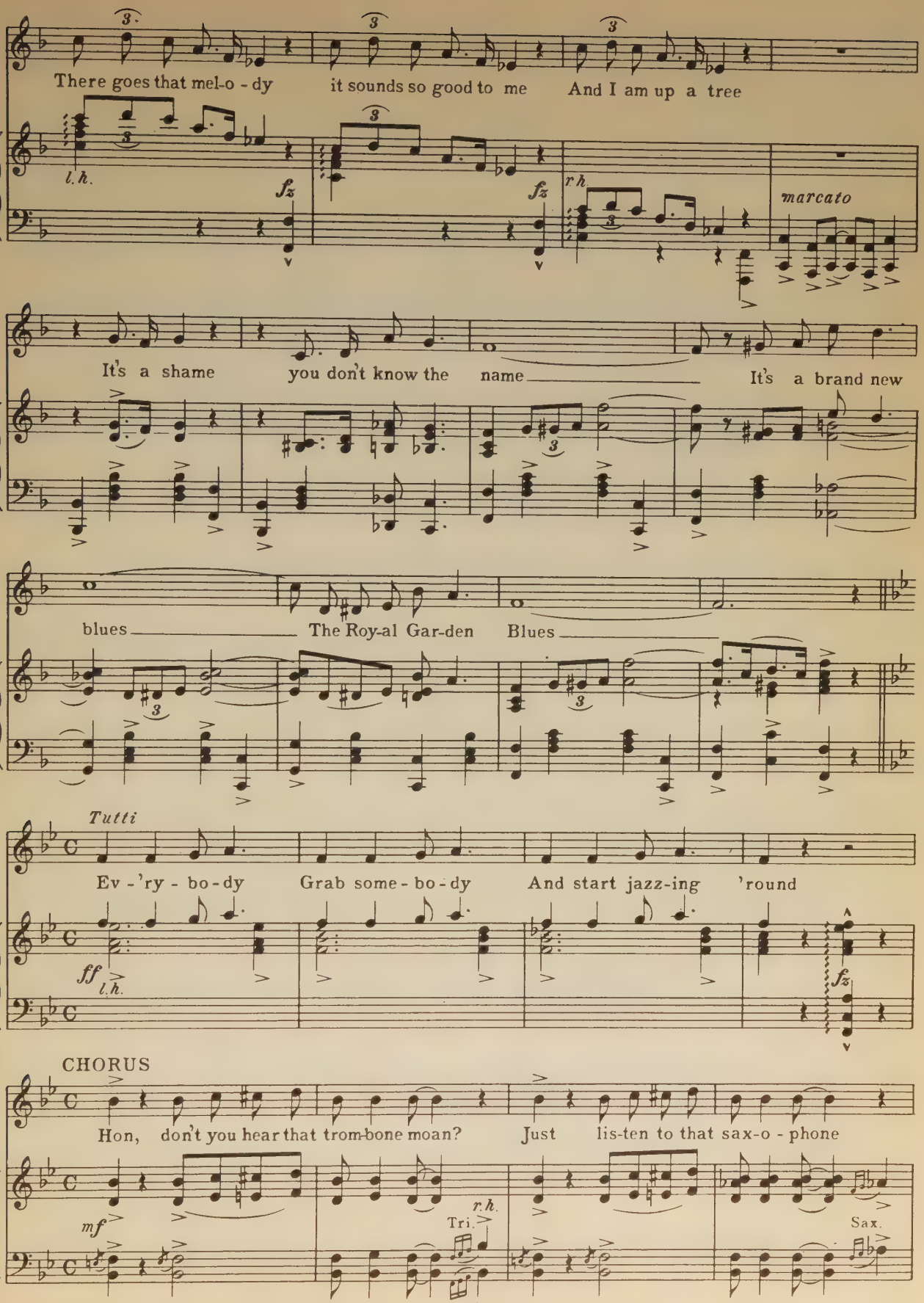
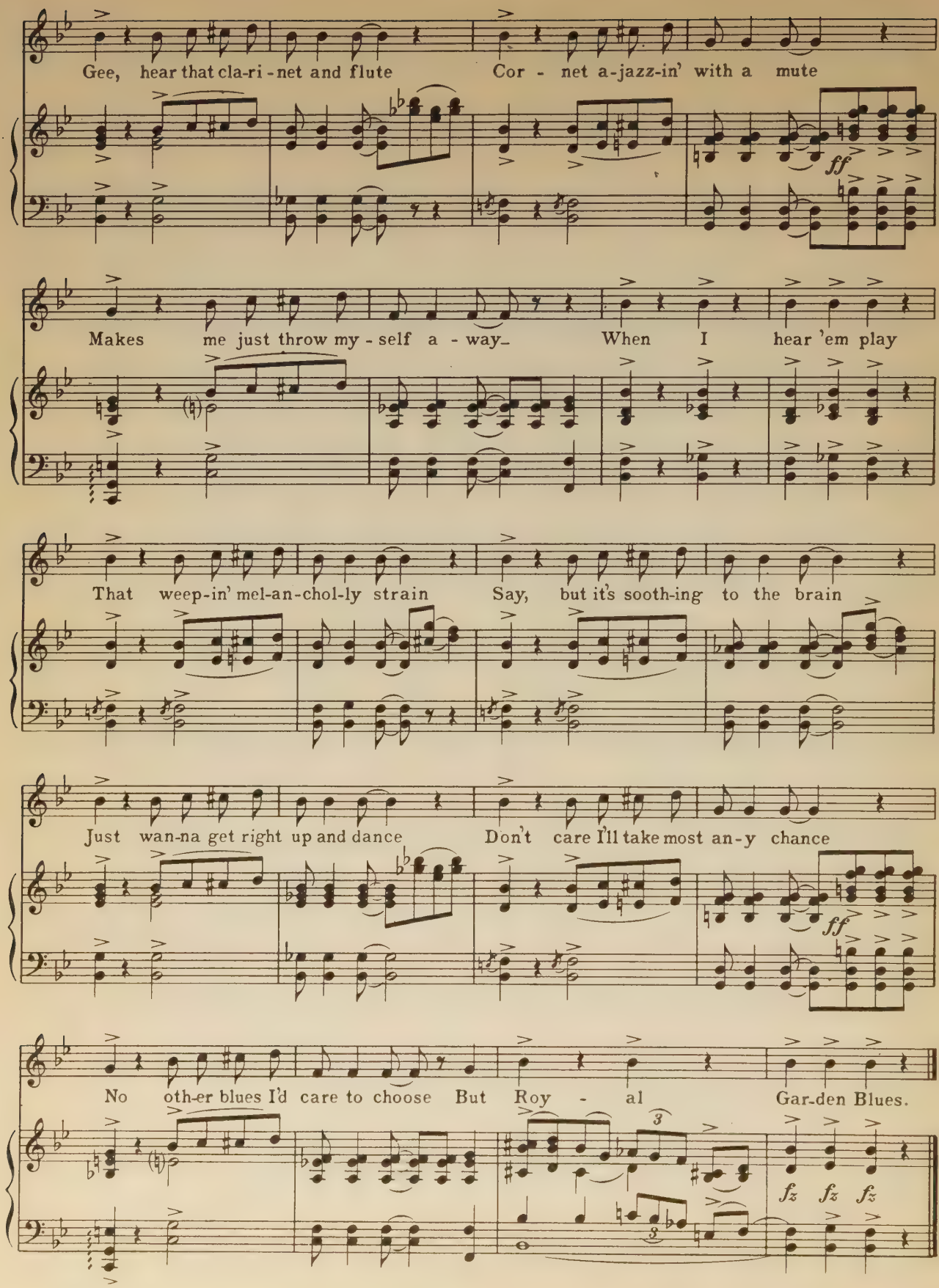
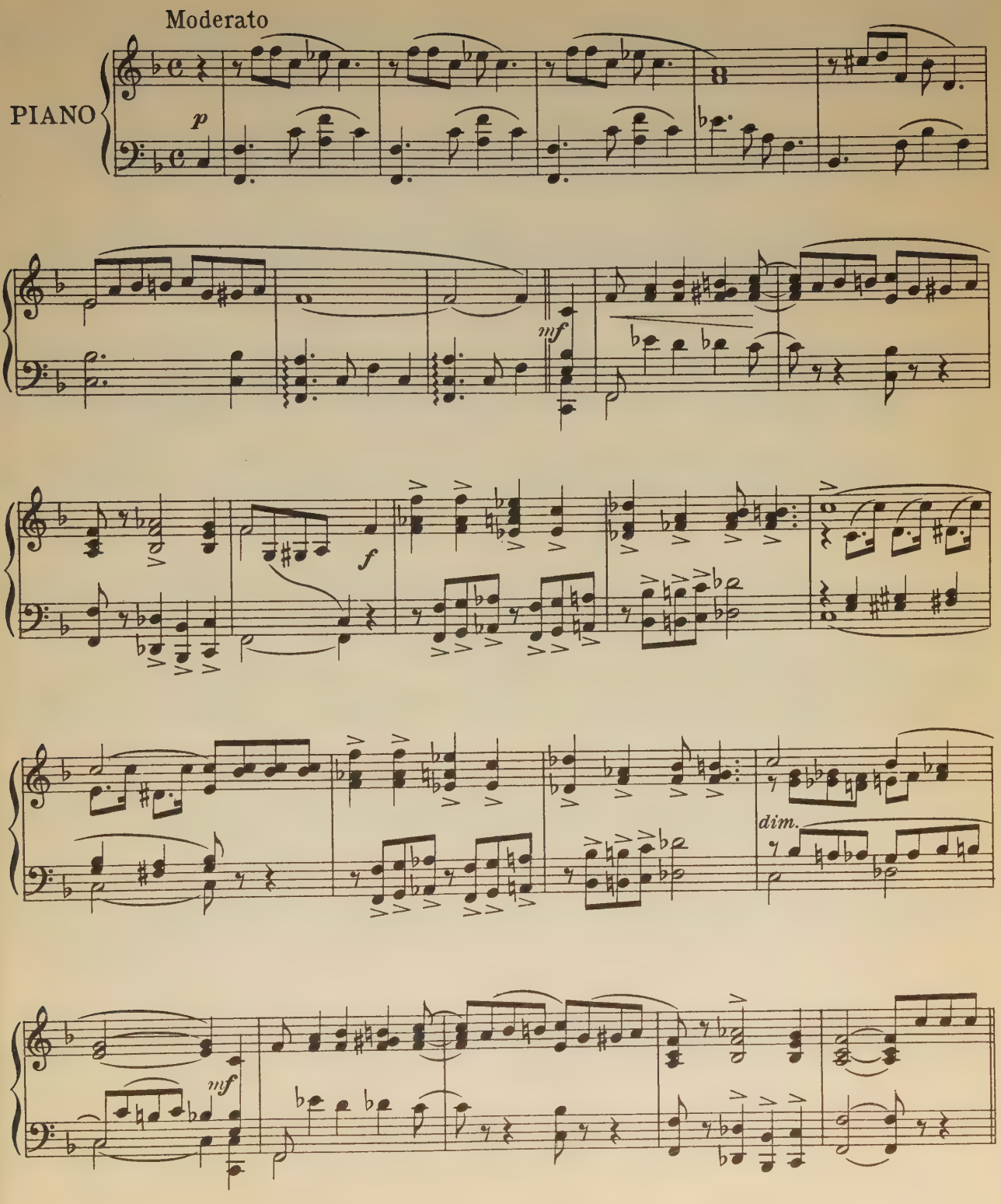

You'll hear 'em play-in', you'll hear em' play-in' Soon you'll be say-in' "Hon jazz me 'round"
Be - cause your feet they can't re - fuse
What's that fa-mil-iar strain that true blue note re-frain It's driv-in' me in-sane
l.h.
fz
l.h.
fz
r.h.
Can't keep still 'Tho' it's a-gainst my will I'm on my P's and
Q's I just can't re - fuse


There goes that mel-o - dy
it sounds so good to me
And I am up a tree
l.h.
fz
fz
r.h.
marcato
It's a shame
you don't know the
name
It's a brand new
blues
The Roy-al Gar-den
Blues
Tutti
Ev - 'ry - bo-dy
Grab some - bo - dy
And start jazz-ing
'round
ff
l.h.
fz
CHORUS
Hon, don't you hear that trom-bone moan?
Just
lis-ten to that sax-o - phone
mf
r.h.
Tri.
Sax.


Gee, hear that cla-ri-net and flute
Cor - net a-jazz-in' with a mute
ff
Makes me just throw my-self a-way
When I hear 'em play
That weep-in' mel-an-chol-ly strain
Say, but it's sooth-ing to the brain
Just wan-na get right up and dance
Don't care I'll take most an-y chance
ff
No oth-er blues I'd care to choose But Roy - al Gar-den Blues.
fz fz fz

AUNT HAGAR'S CHILDREN

W. C. HANDY



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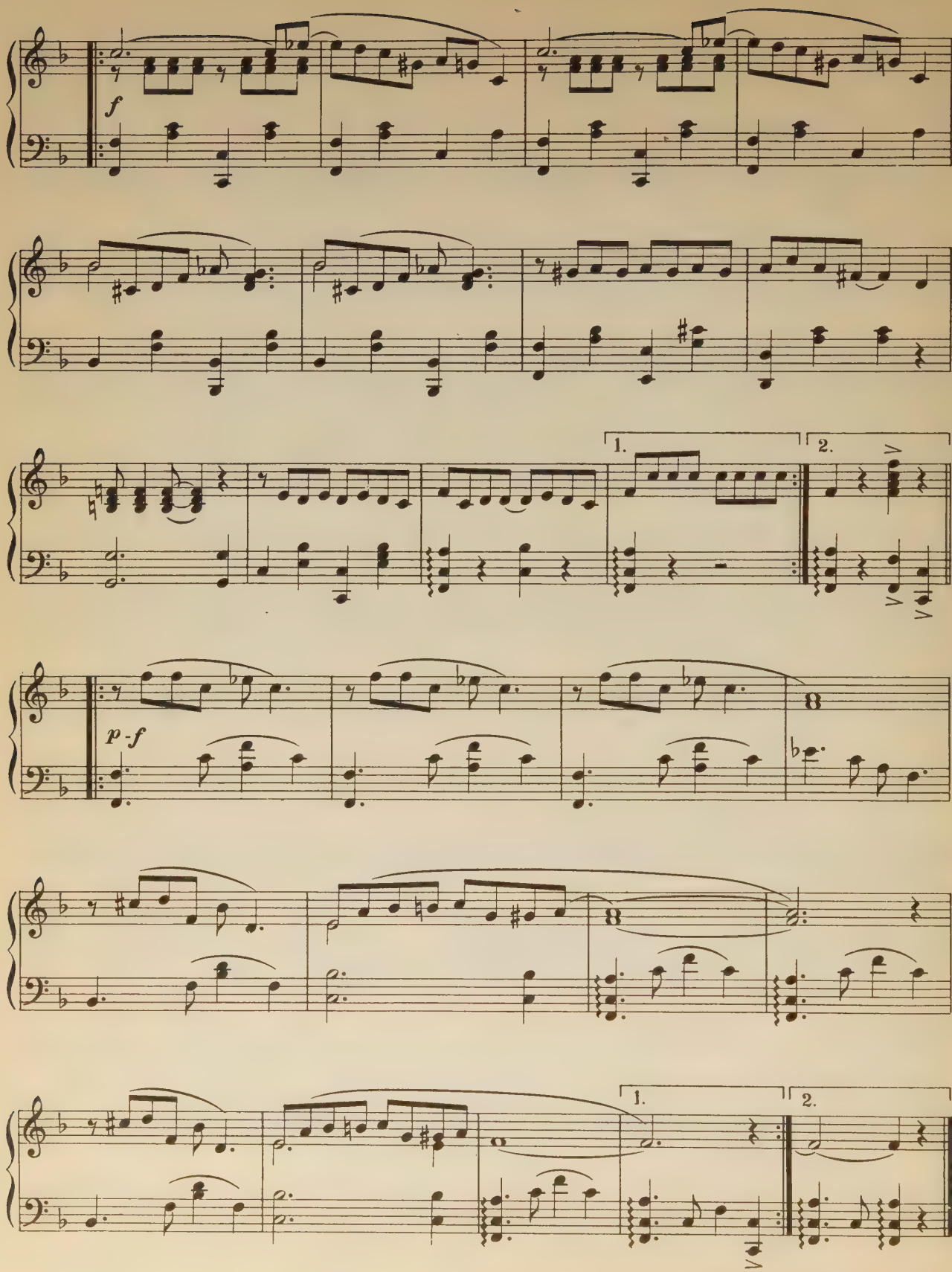
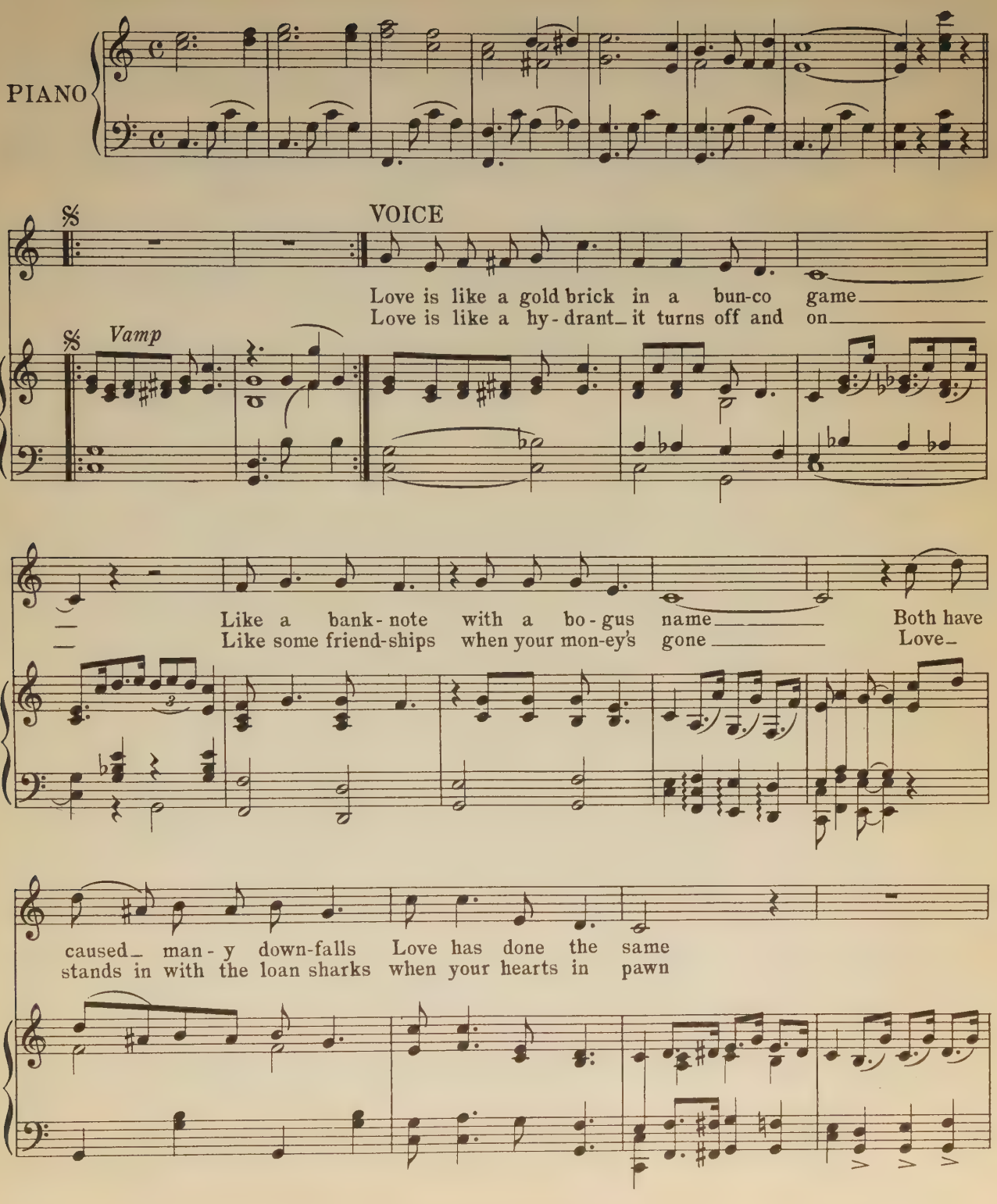

f
1.
2.
p-f
8
1.
2.

LOVELESS LOVE

W. C. HANDY


PIANO
VOICE
Love is like a gold brick in a bun-co game
Love is like a hy-drant it turns off and on
Vamp
Like a bank-note with a bo-gus name Both have
Like some friend-ships when your mon-ey's gone Love
caused man-y down-falls Love has done the same
stands in with the loan sharks when your hearts in pawn

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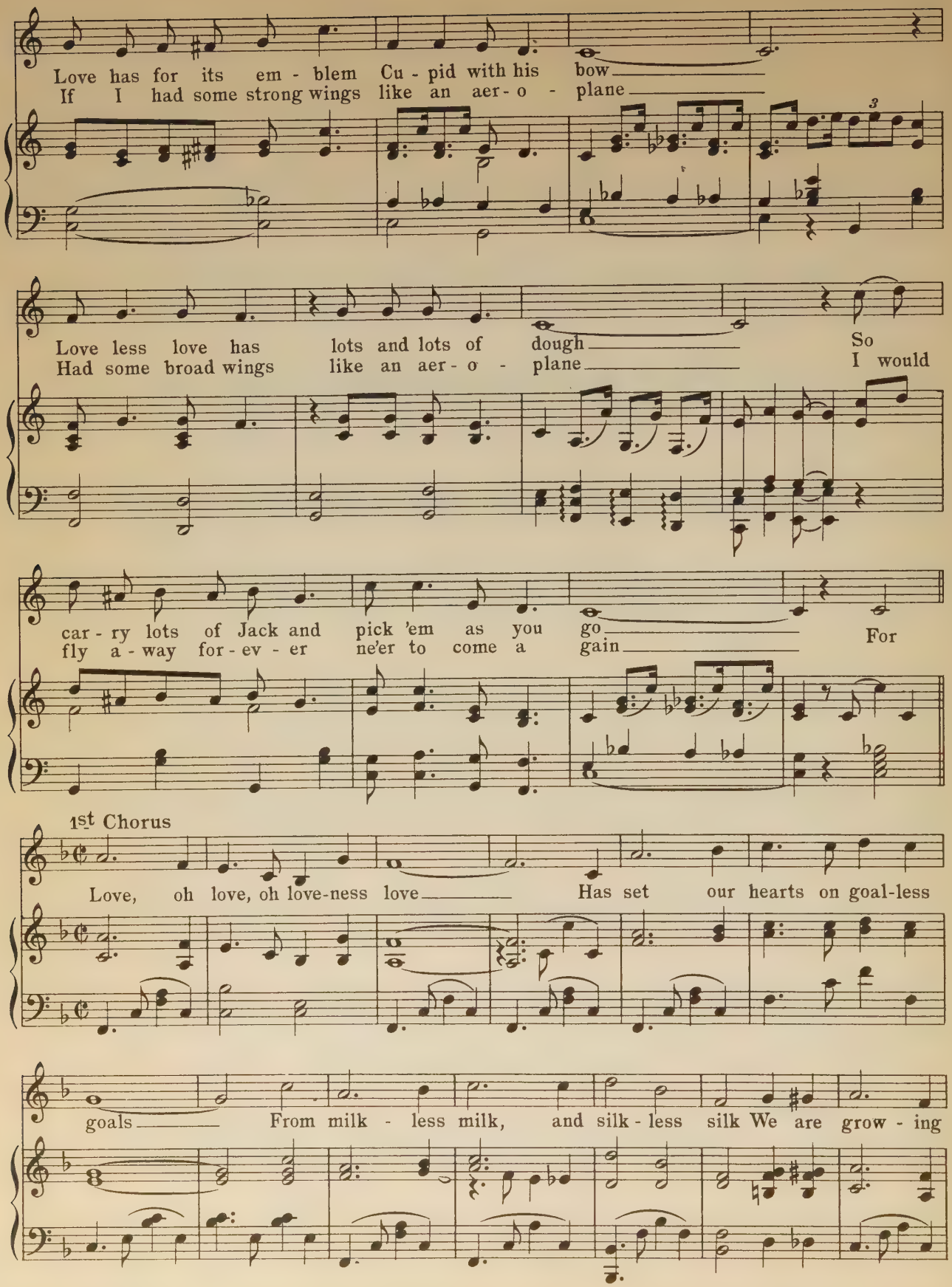
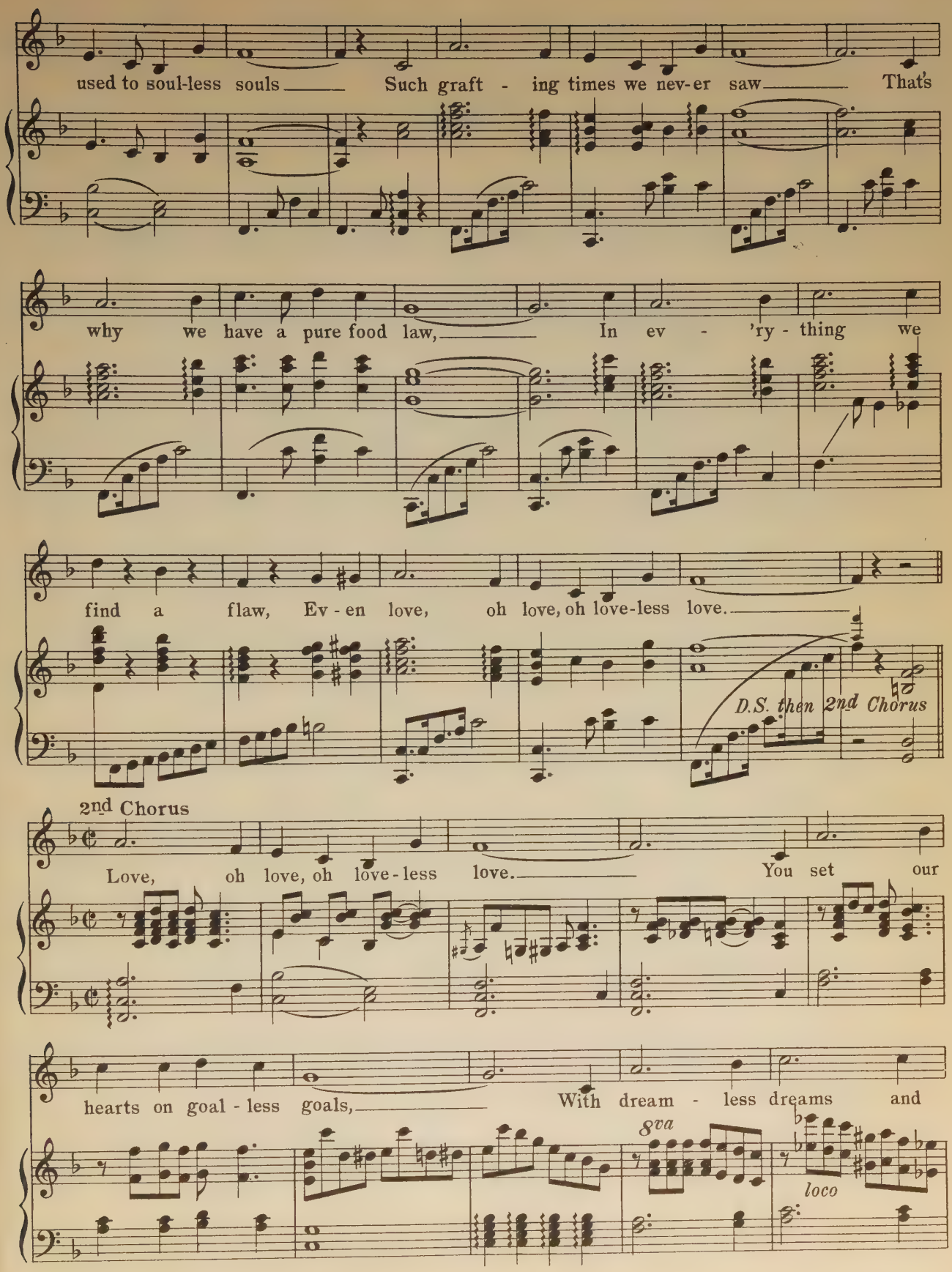
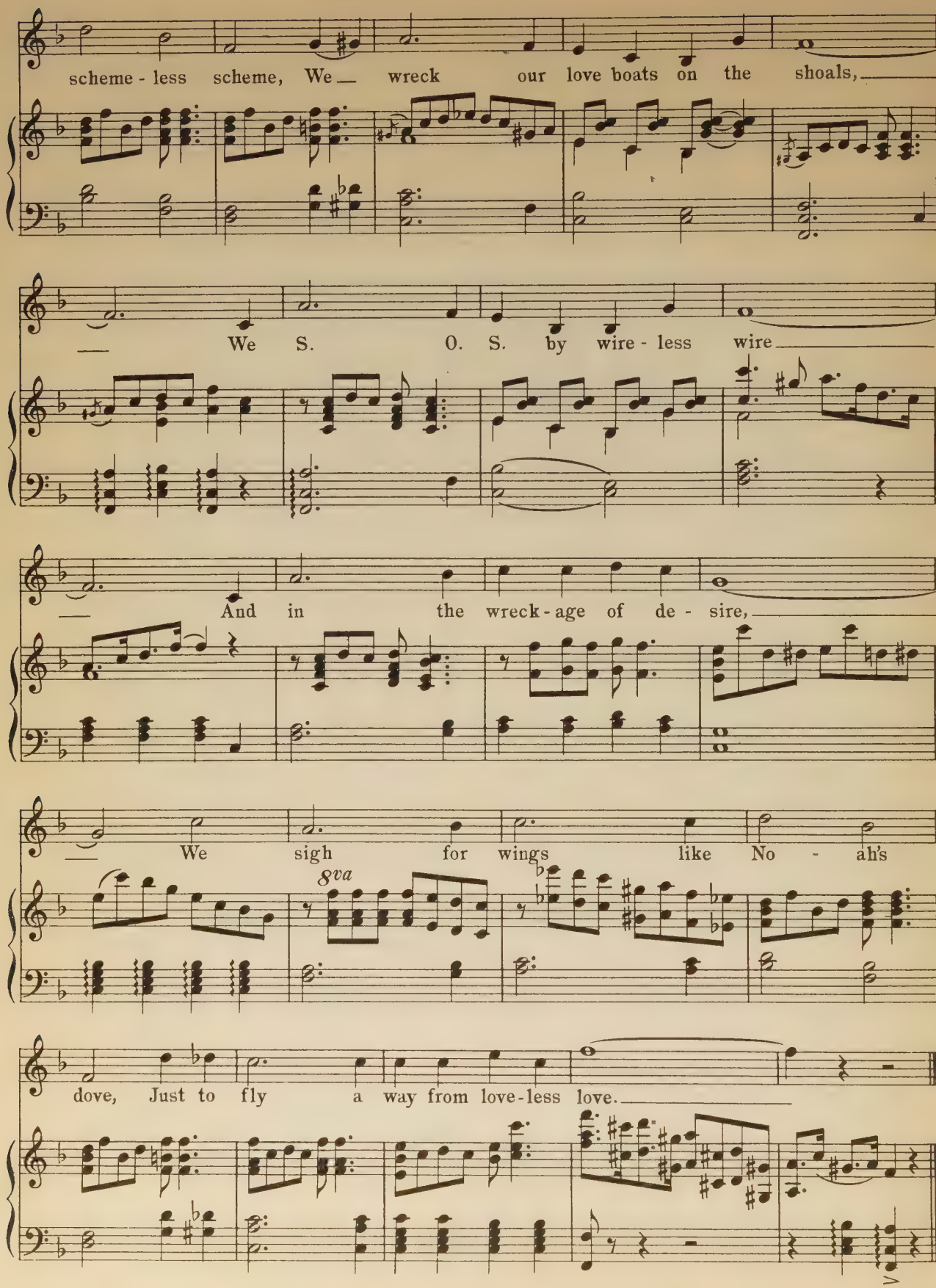
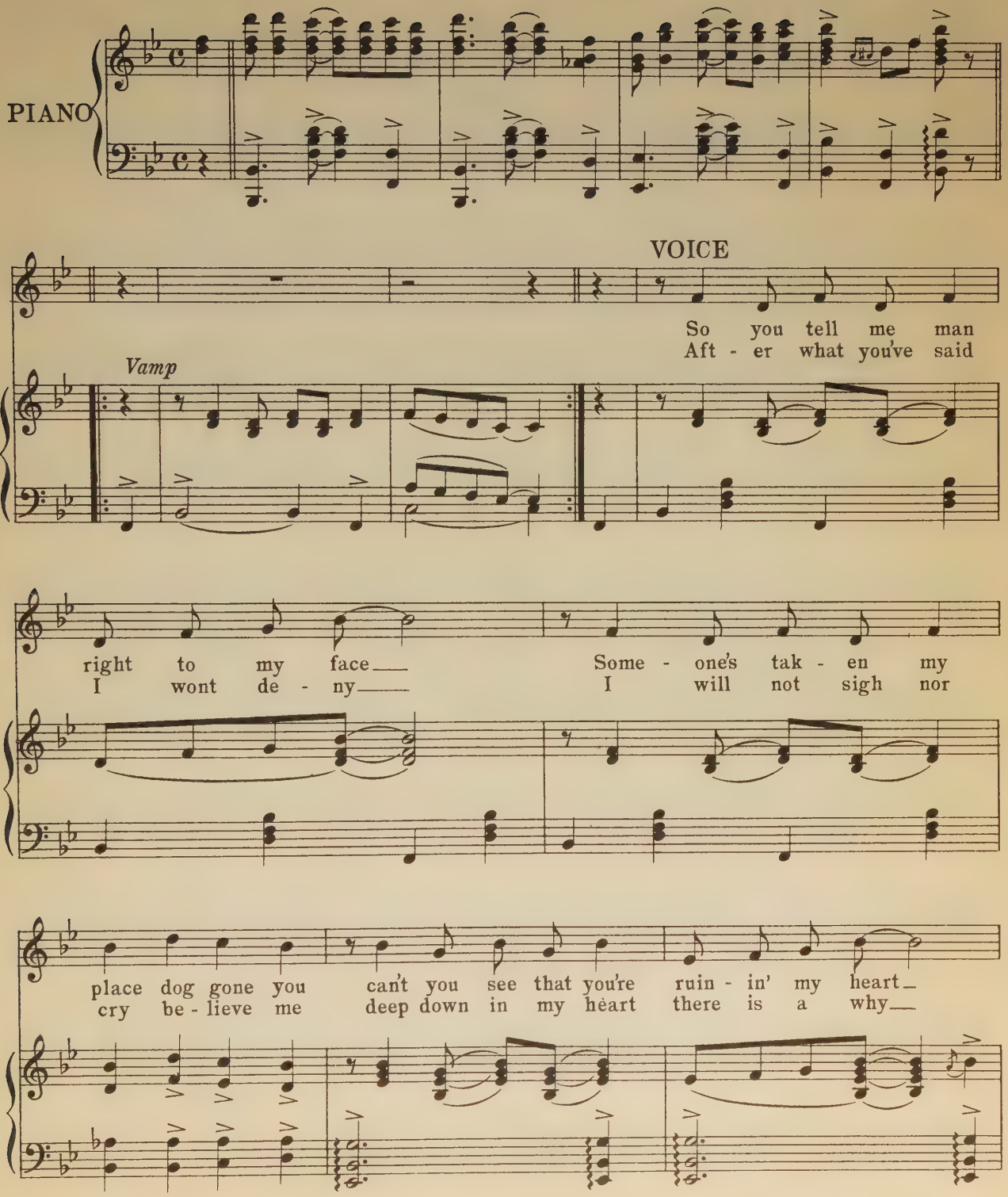

Love has for its em - blem Cu - pid with his bow
If I had some strong wings like an aer - o - plane
Love less love has lots and lots of dough So
Had some broad wings like an aer - o - plane I would
car - ry lots of Jack and pick 'em as you go For
fly a - way for - ev - er ne'er to come a gain
1st Chorus
Love, oh love, oh love-ness love Has set our hearts on goal-less
goals From milk - less milk, and silk - less silk We are grow - ing


used to soul-less souls Such graft - ing times we nev-er saw That's
why we have a pure food law, In ev - 'ry - thing we
find a flaw, Ev - en love, oh love, oh love-less love.
D.S. then 2nd Chorus
2nd Chorus
Love, oh love, oh love - less love. You set our
hearts on goal - less goals, With dream - less dreams and
8va
loco


scheme - less scheme, We wreck our love boats on the shoals,
We S. O. S. by wire - less wire
And in the wreck - age of de - sire,
We sigh for wings like No - ah's
8va
dove, Just to fly a way from love-less love.

YOU'LL THINK OF ME

H. QUALLI CLARK


PIANO
VOICE
So you tell me man
Aft - er what you've said
Vamp
right to my face
I wont de - ny
Some - one's tak - en my
I will not sigh nor
place dog gone you
cry be - lieve me
can't you see that you're
deep down in my heart
ruin - in' my heart
there is a why

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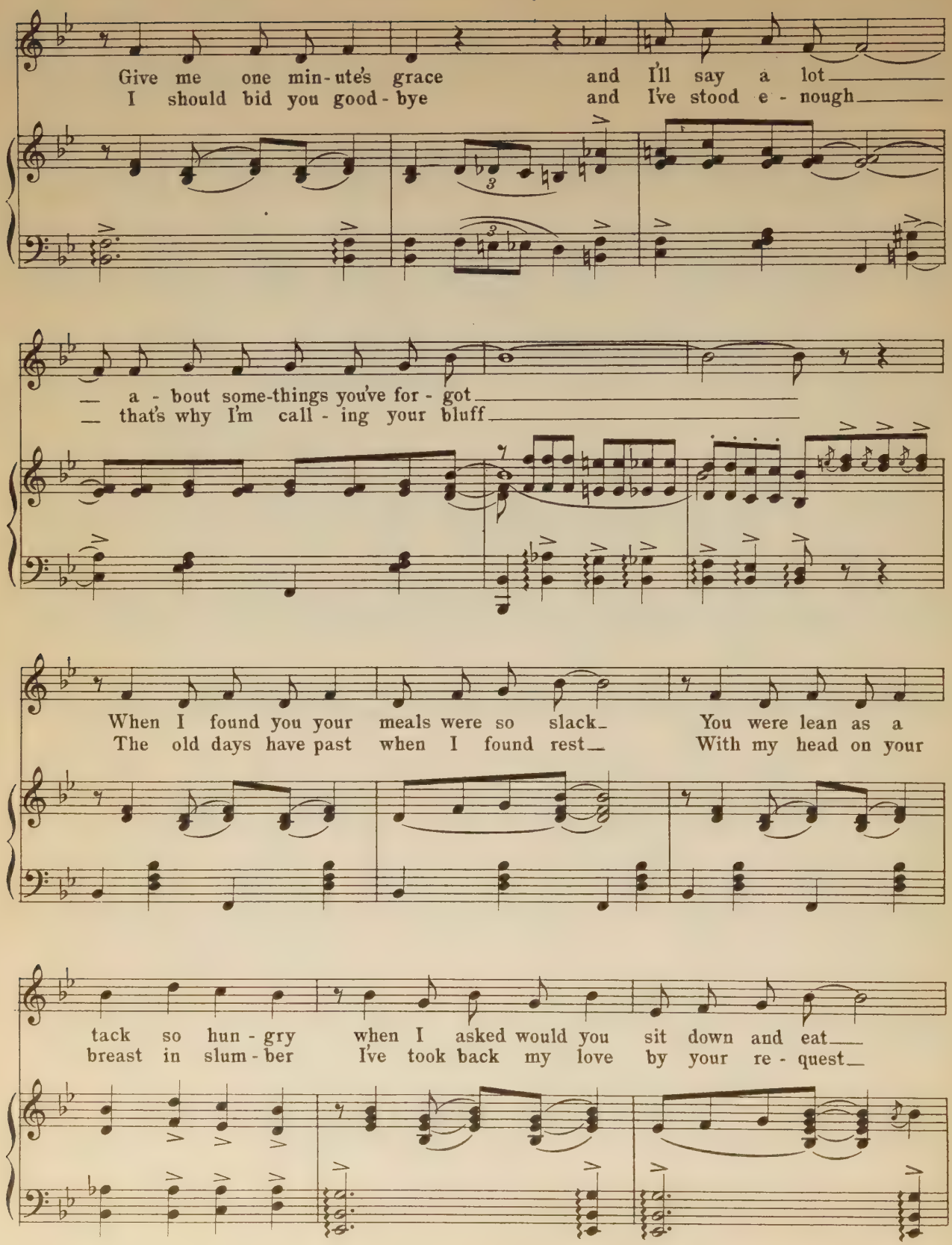
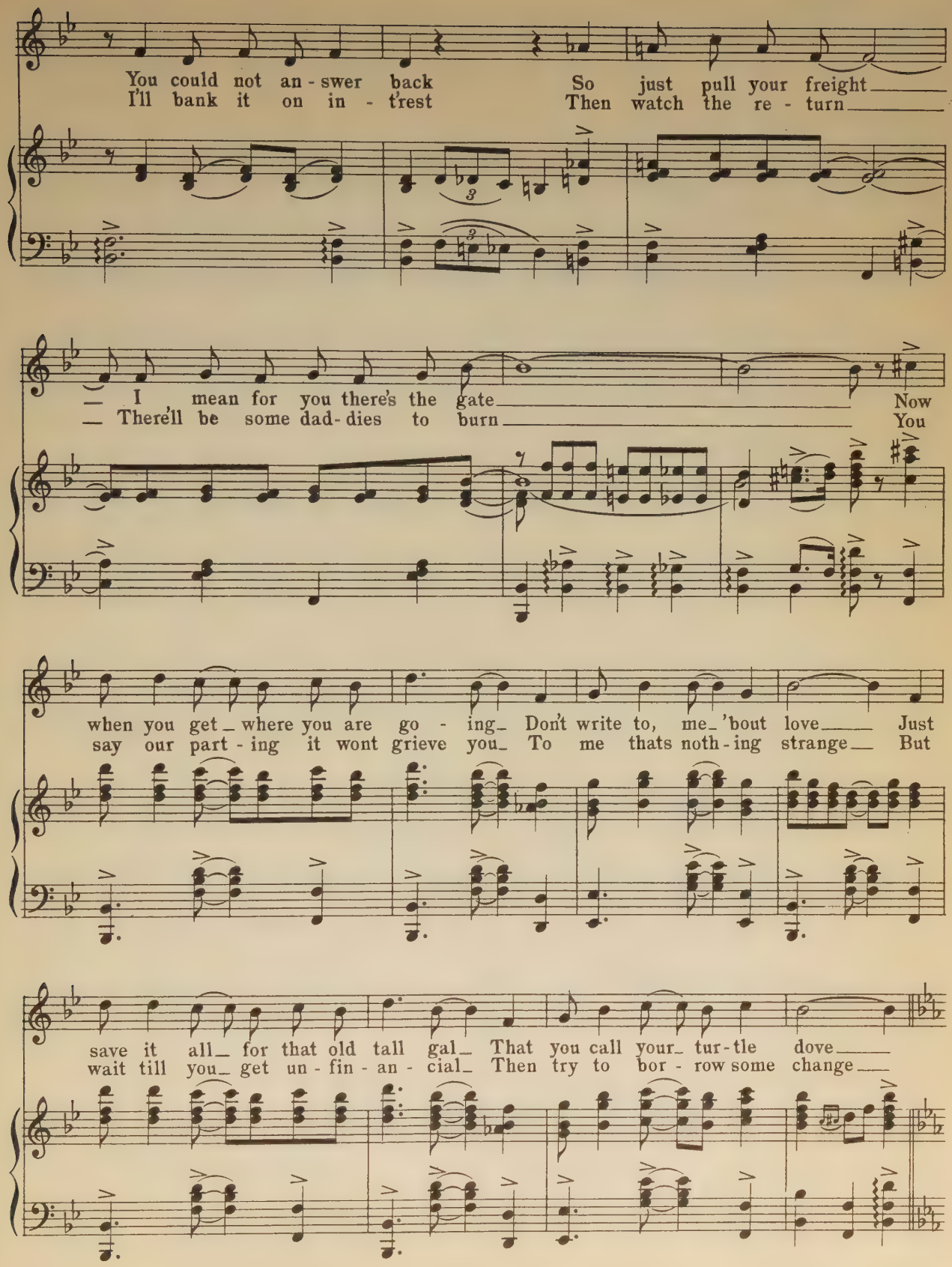
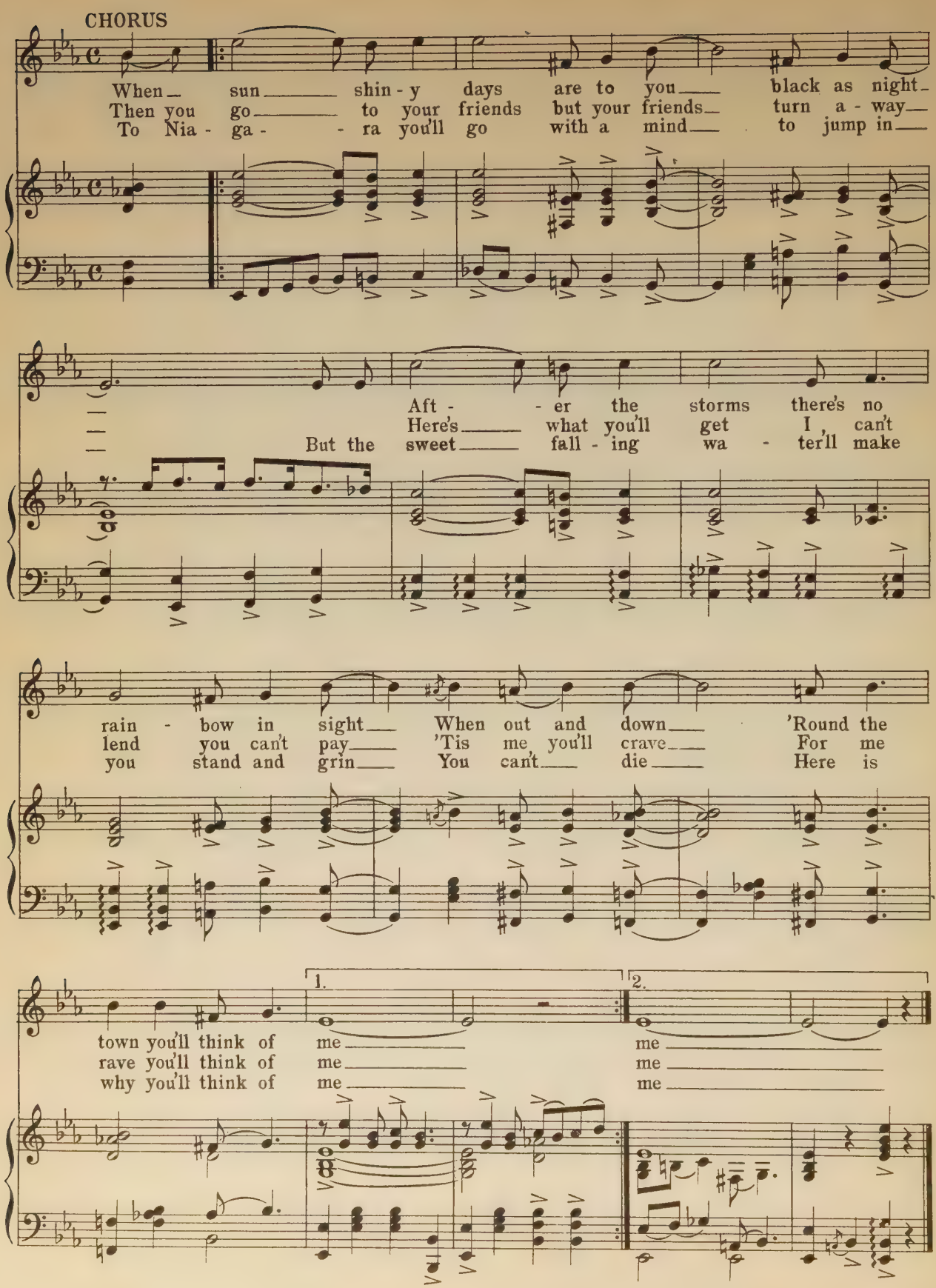
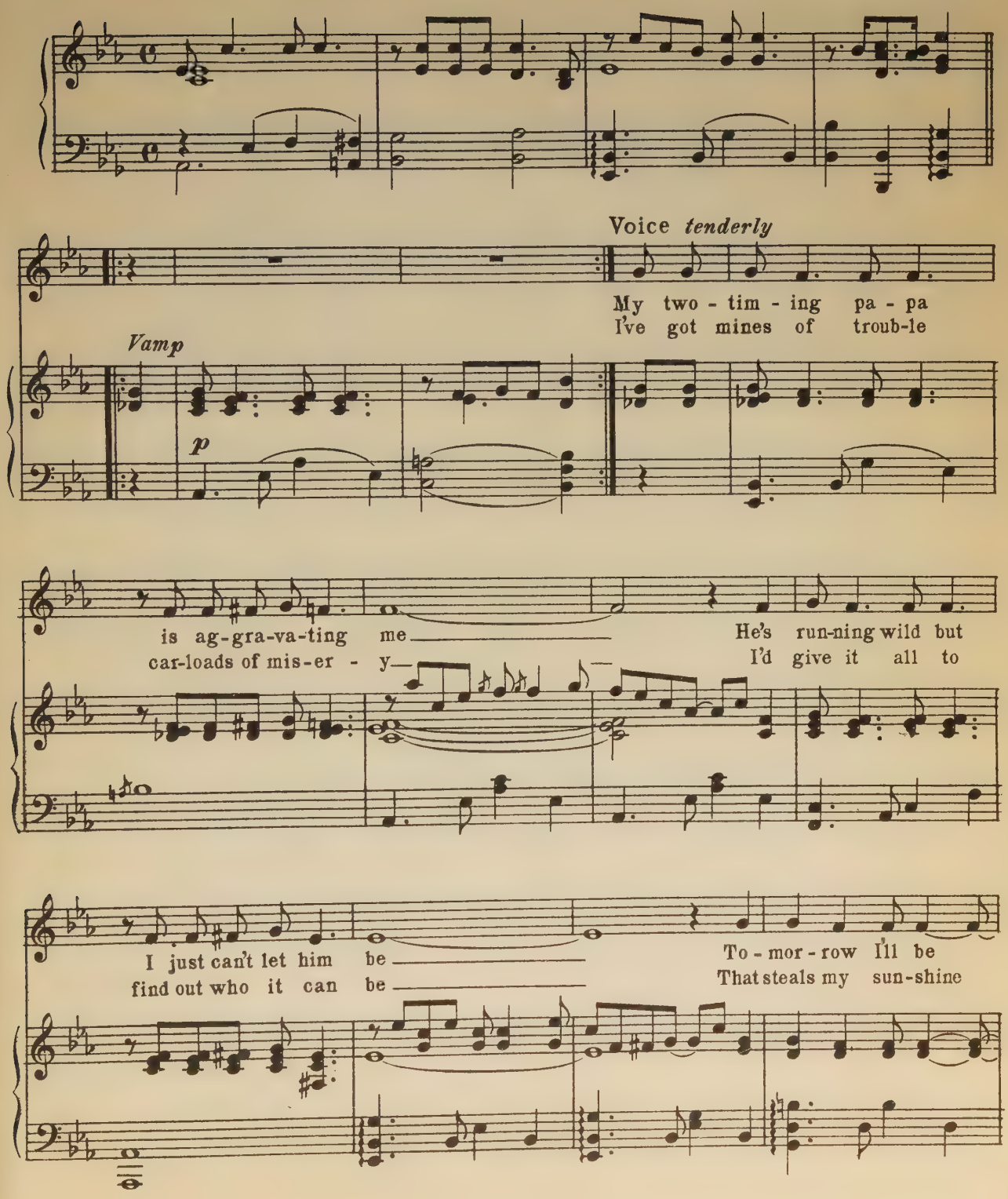

Give me one min-ute's grace and I'll say a lot
I should bid you good-bye and I've stood e-nough
a-bout some-things you've for-got
that's why I'm call-ing your bluff
When I found you your meals were so slack You were lean as a
The old days have past when I found rest With my head on your
tack so hun-gry when I asked would you sit down and eat
breast in slum-ber I've took back my love by your re-quest


You could not an - swer back So just pull your freight
I'll bank it on in - trest Then watch the re - turn
— I mean for you there's the gate Now
— There'll be some dad-dies to burn You
when you get where you are go - ing Don't write to, me 'bout love Just
say our part - ing it wont grieve you To me thats noth - ing strange But
save it all for that old tall gal That you call your tur - tle dove
wait till you get un - fin - an - cial Then try to bor - row some change


CHORUS
When sun shin - y days are to you black as night
Then you go to your friends but your friends turn a - way
To Nia - ga - ra you'll go with a mind to jump in
Aft - er the storms there's no
Here's what you'll get I can't
But the sweet fall - ing wa - ter'll make
rain - bow in sight When out and down 'Round the
lend you can't pay 'Tis me you'll crave For me
you stand and grin You can't die Here is
1.
2.
town you'll think of me me
rave you'll think of me me
why you'll think of me me

SUNDOWN BLUES

By W. C. HANDY


Voice *tenderly*
My two - tim - ing pa - pa
I've got mines of troub-le
Vamp
p
is ag-gra-va-ting me
car-loads of mis-er - y
He's run-ning wild but
I'd give it all to
I just can't let him be
find out who it can be
To - mor - row I'll be
That steals my sun-shine

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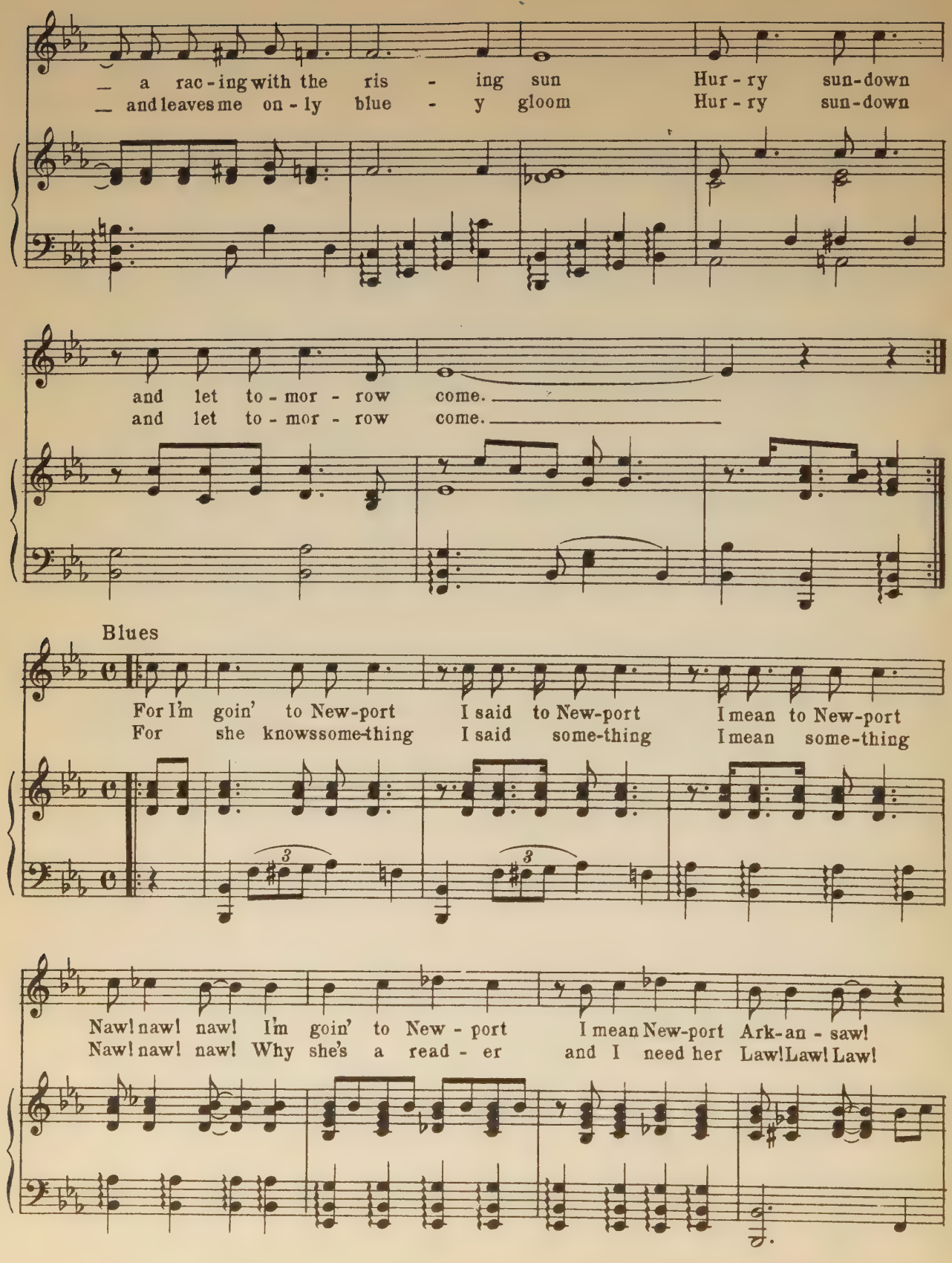
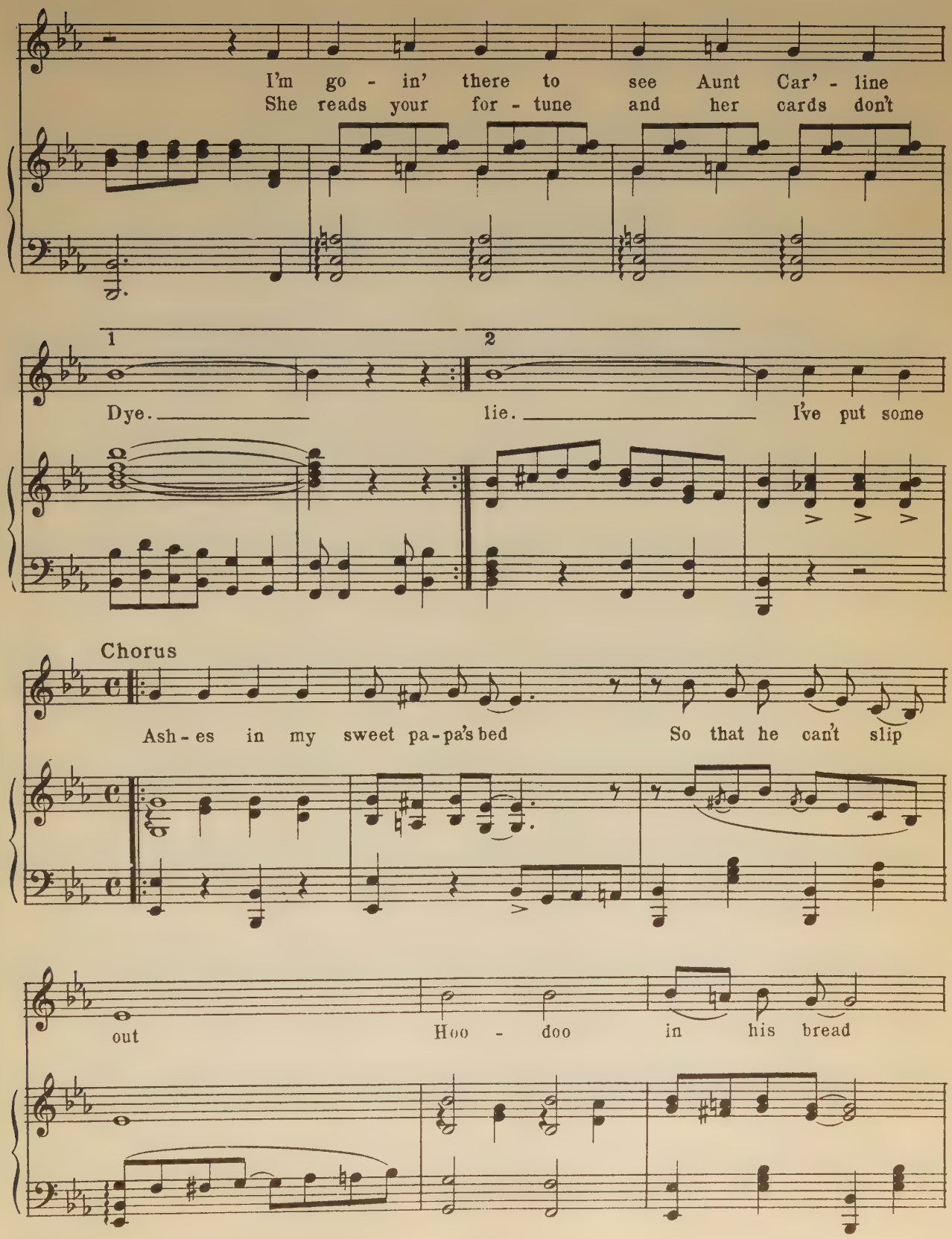
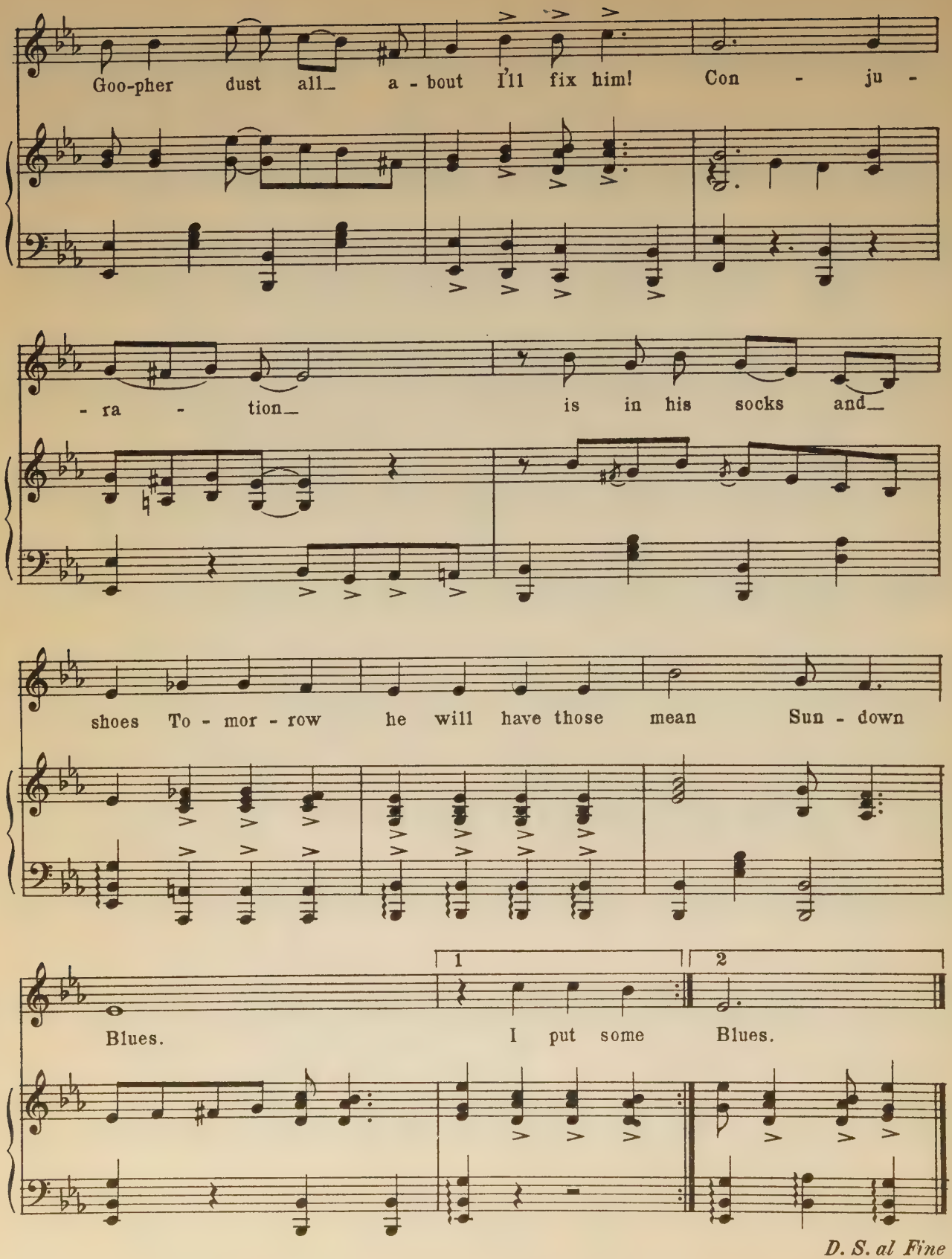
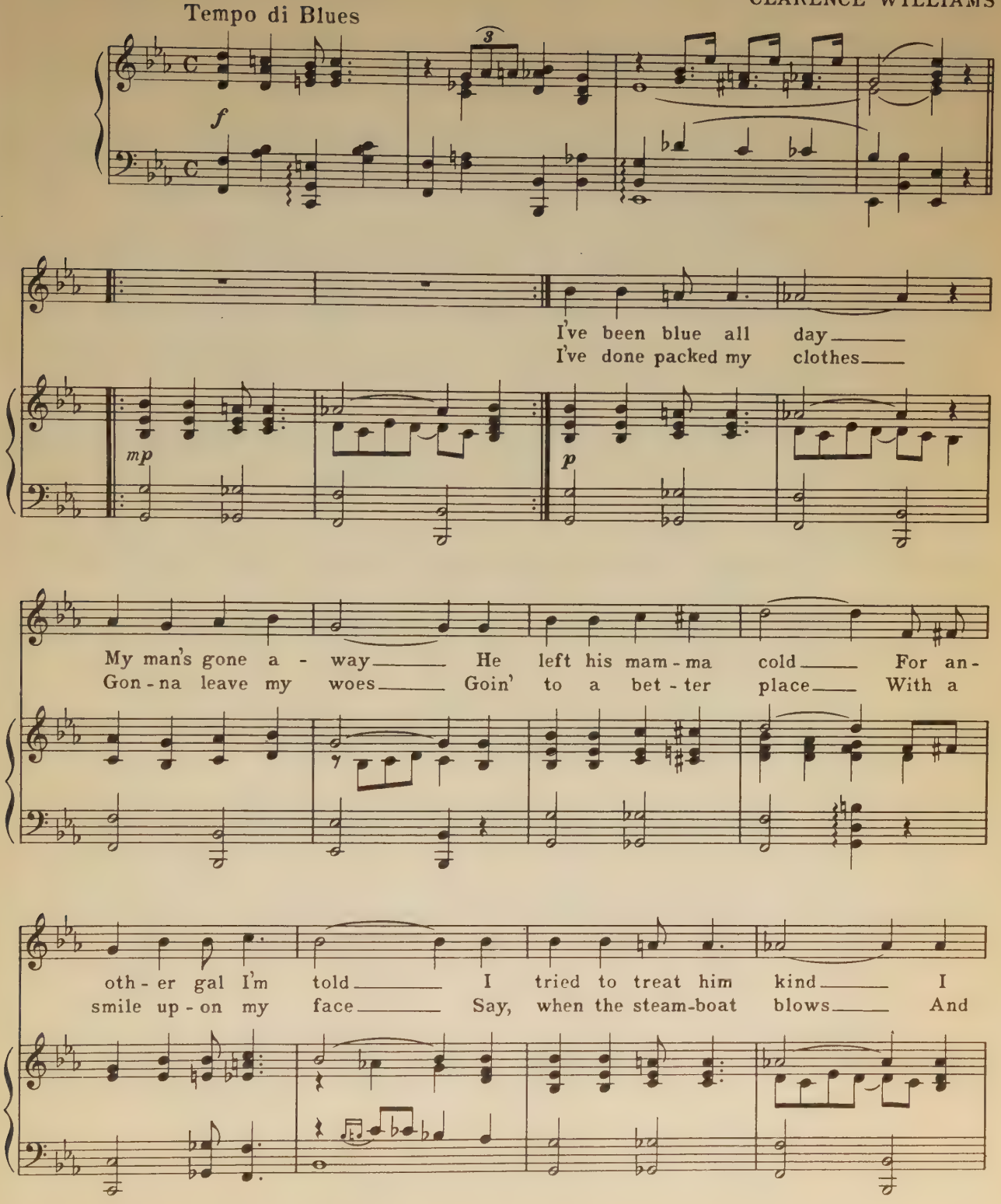

— a rac - ing with the ris - ing sun Hur - ry sun-down
— and leaves me on - ly blue - y gloom Hur - ry sun-down
and let to - mor - row come.
and let to - mor - row come.
Blues
For I'm goin' to New-port I said to New-port I mean to New-port
For she knows some-thing I said some-thing I mean some-thing
Naw! naw! naw! I'm goin' to New - port I mean New-port Ark-an - saw!
Naw! naw! naw! Why she's a read - er and I need her Law! Law! Law!


I'm go - in' there to see Aunt Car' - line
She reads your for - tune and her cards don't
1
2
Dye.
lie.
I've put some
Chorus
Ash - es in my sweet pa - pa's bed
So that he can't slip
out
Hoo - doo in his bread


Goo-pher dust all_ a - bout I'll fix him! Con - ju -
- ra - tion_ is in his socks and_
shoes To - mor - row he will have those mean Sun - down
1
2
Blues. I put some Blues.
D. S. al Fine

GULF COAST BLUES

Words and Music by
CLARENCE WILLIAMS


Tempo di Blues
f
3
I've been blue all day
I've done packed my clothes
mp
p
My man's gone a - way He left his mam - ma cold For an -
Gon - na leave my woes Goin' to a bet - ter place With a
oth - er gal I'm told I tried to treat him kind I
smile up - on my face Say, when the steam-boat blows And

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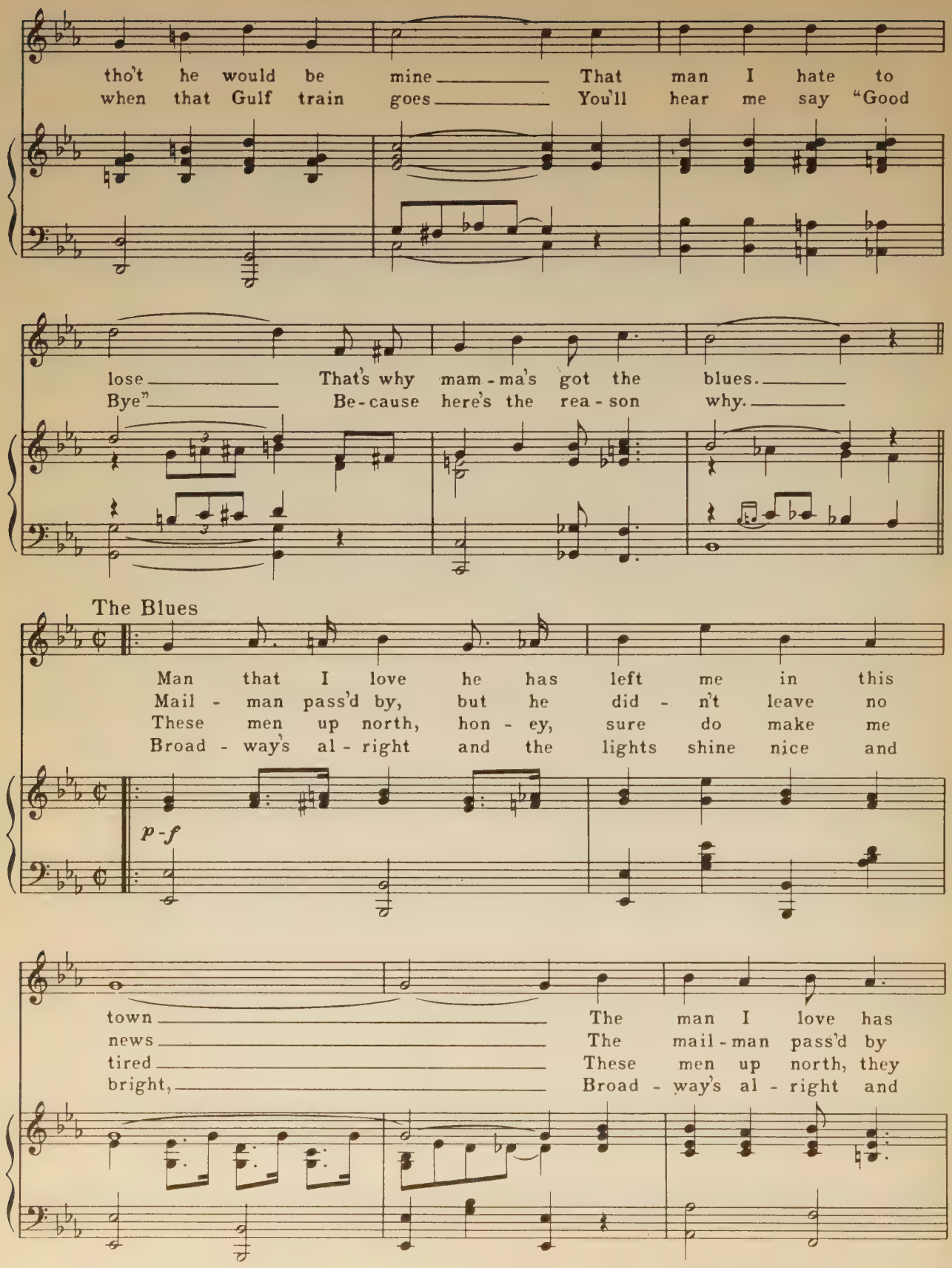
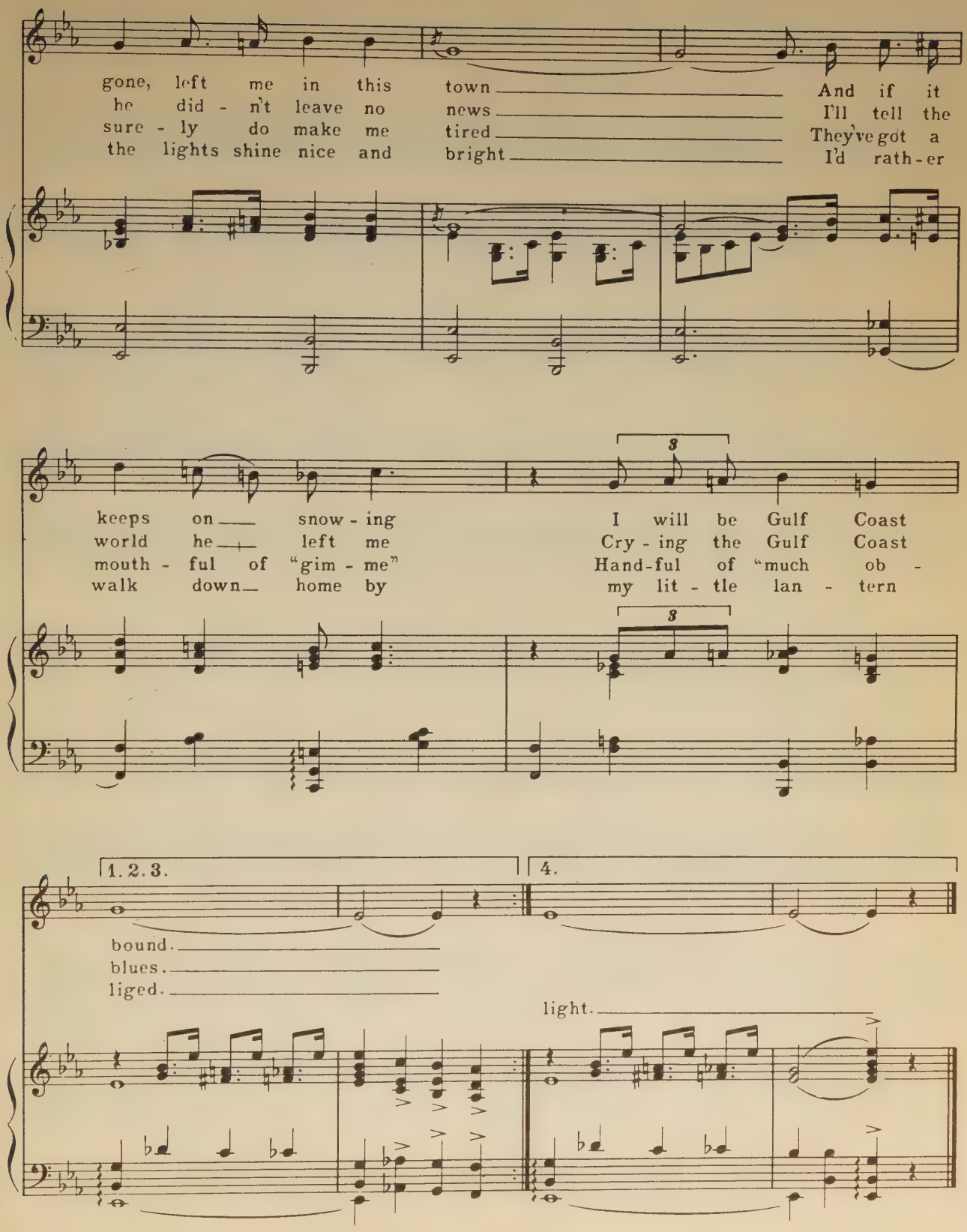
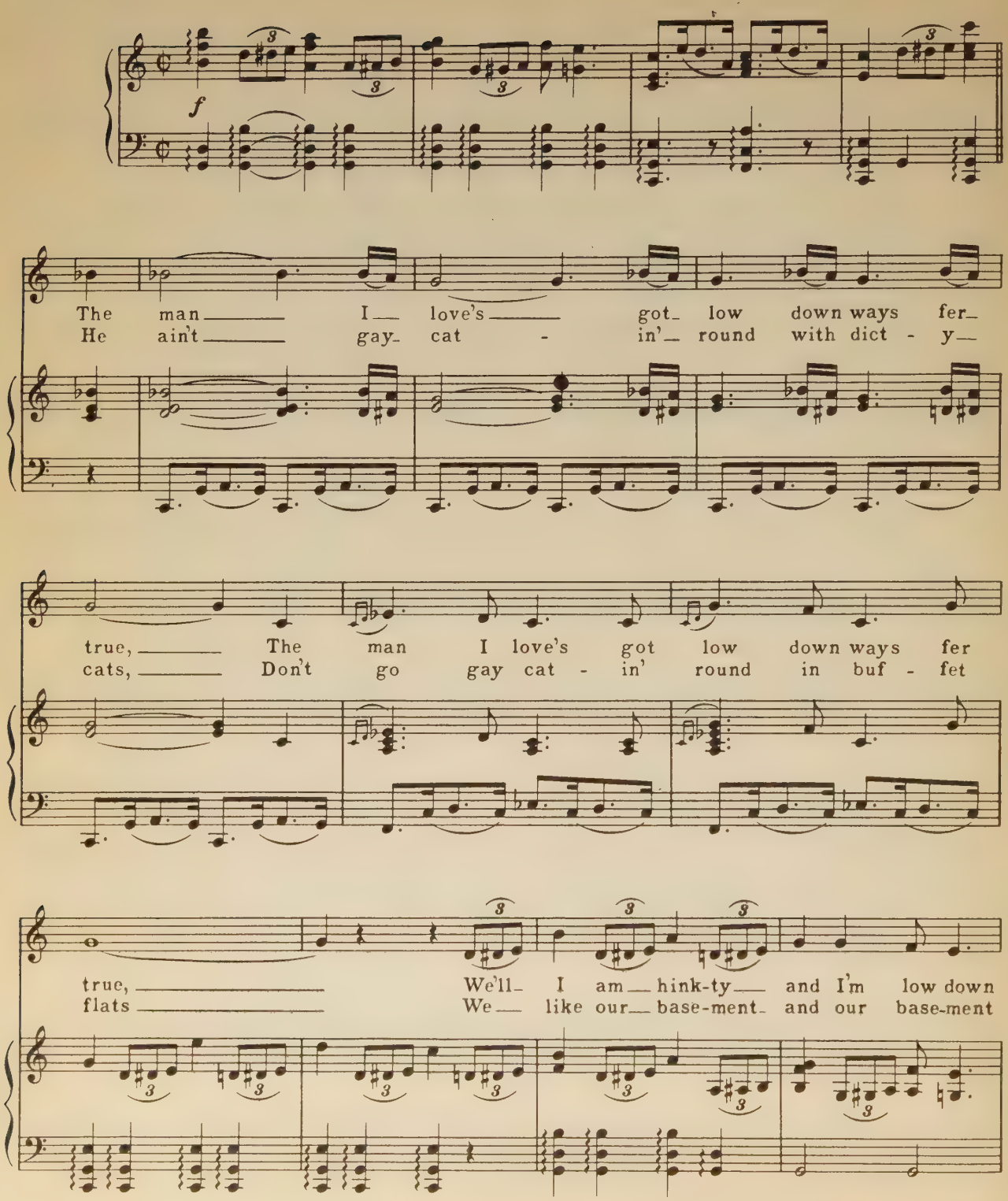

tho't he would be mine That man I hate to
when that Gulf train goes You'll hear me say "Good
lose That's why mam-ma's got the blues.
Bye" Be-cause here's the rea-son why.
The Blues
Man that I love he has left me in this
Mail - man pass'd by, but he did - n't leave no
These men up north, hon - ey, sure do make me
Broad - way's al - right and the lights shine nice and
p - f
town The man I love has
news The mail-man pass'd by
tired These men up north, they
bright, Broad - way's al - right and


gone, left me in this town And if it
he did - n't leave no news I'll tell the
sure - ly do make me tired They've got a
the lights shine nice and bright I'd rath - er
keeps on snow - ing I will be Gulf Coast
world he left me Cry - ing the Gulf Coast
mouth - ful of "gim - me" Hand-ful of "much ob -
walk down home by my lit - tle lan - tern
3
3
1. 2. 3.
4.
bound.
blues.
liged.
light.

THE BASEMENT BLUES

Words and Music by
W. C. HANDY


f
The man I love's got low down ways fer
He ain't gay cat - in' round with dict - y
true, The man I love's got low down ways fer
cats, Don't go gay cat - in' round in buf - fet
true, We'll I am hink-ty and I'm low down
flats We like our base-ment and our base-ment

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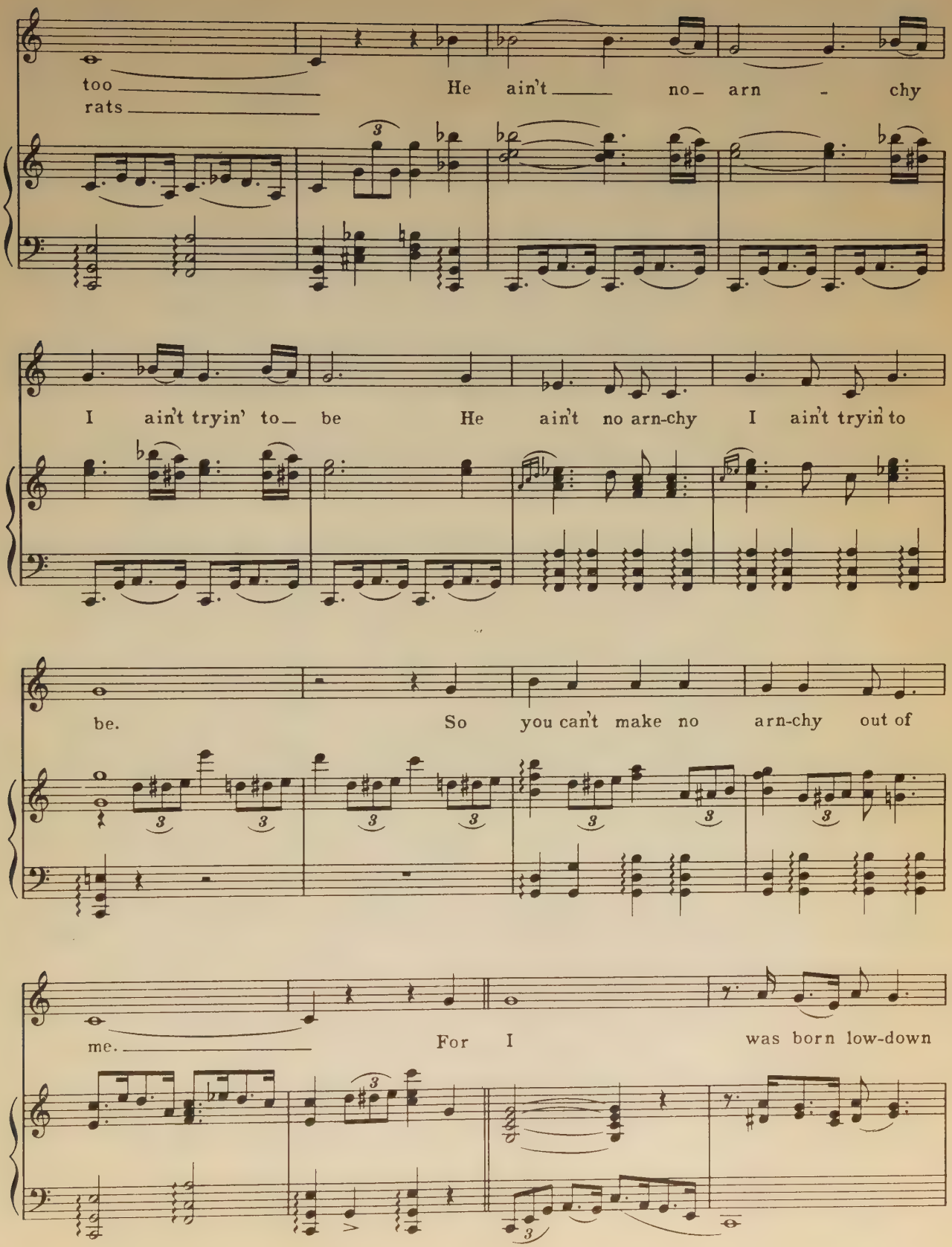
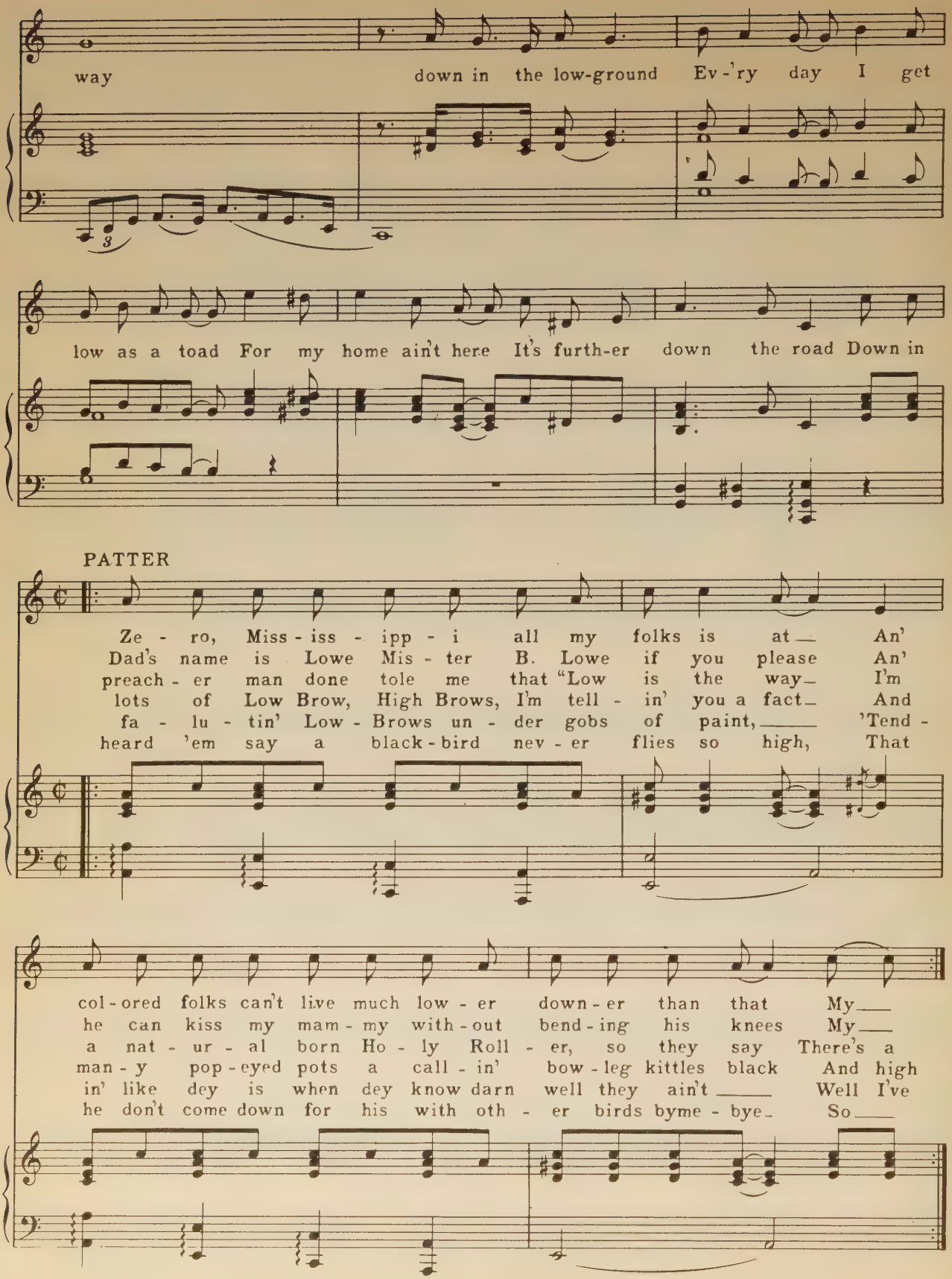
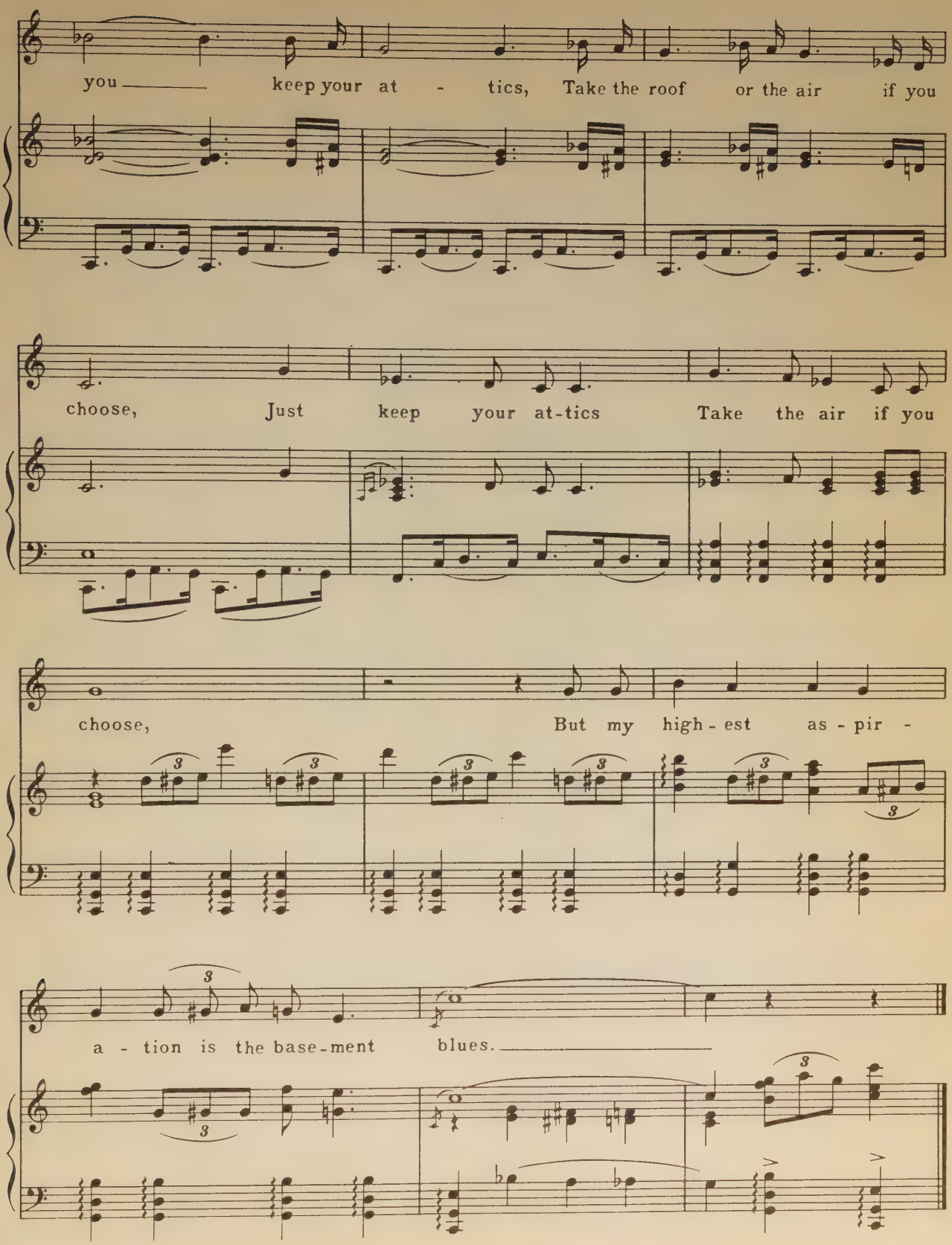

too
rats
He ain't no arn - chy
I ain't tryin' to be
He ain't no arn-chy
I ain't tryin to
be.
So you can't make no arn-chy out of
me.
For I was born low-down

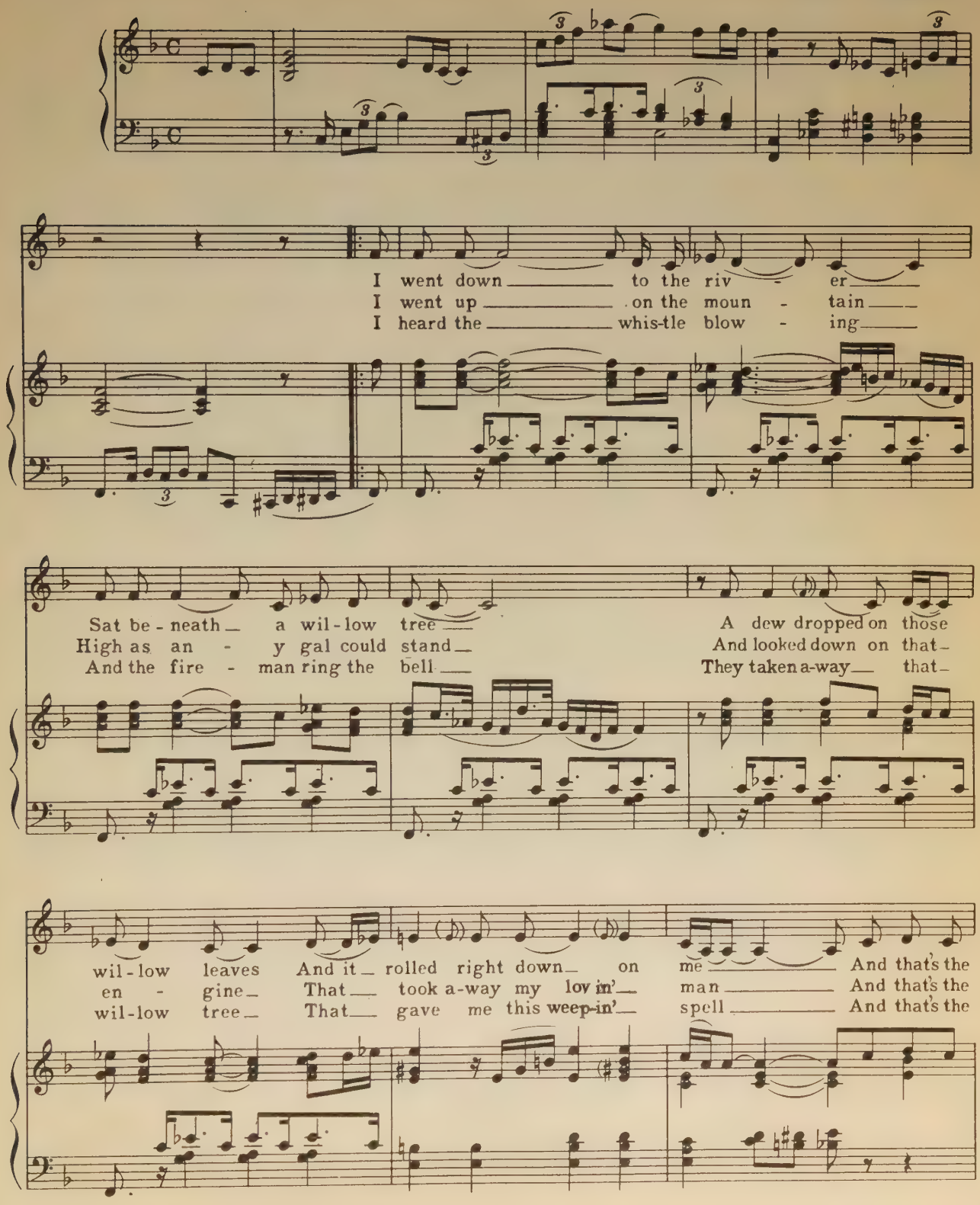

way down in the low-ground Ev-'ry day I get
low as a toad For my home ain't here It's furth-er down the road Down in
PATTER
Ze - ro, Miss - iss - ipp - i all my folks is at— An'
Dad's name is Lowe Mis - ter B. Lowe if you please An'
preach - er man done tole me that "Low is the way— I'm
lots of Low Brow, High Brows, I'm tell - in' you a fact— And
fa - lu - tin' Low - Brows un - der gobs of paint,— 'Tend -
heard 'em say a black - bird nev - er flies so high, That
col - ored folks can't live much low - er down - er than that My—
he can kiss my mam - my with - out bend - ing his knees My—
a nat - ur - al born Ho - ly Roll - er, so they say There's a
man - y pop - eyed pots a call - in' bow - leg kittles black And high
in' like dey is when dey know darn well they ain't— Well I've
he don't come down for his with oth - er birds byme - bye— So—


you keep your at - tics, Take the roof or the air if you
choose, Just keep your at-tics Take the air if you
choose, But my high - est as - pir -
a - tion is the base-ment blues.

W. C. HANDY

WEEPING WILLOW BLUES
(AFTER BESSIE SMITH)

Words and Music by
PAUL CARTER


I went down to the riv - er
I went up on the moun - tain
I heard the whis-tle blow - ing
Sat be - neath a wil - low tree
High as an - y gal could stand
And the fire - man ring the bell
A dew dropped on those
And looked down on that
They taken a-way that
wil - low leaves And it rolled right down on me And that's the
en - gine That took a-way my lov in' man And that's the
wil - low tree That gave me this weep-in' spell And that's the

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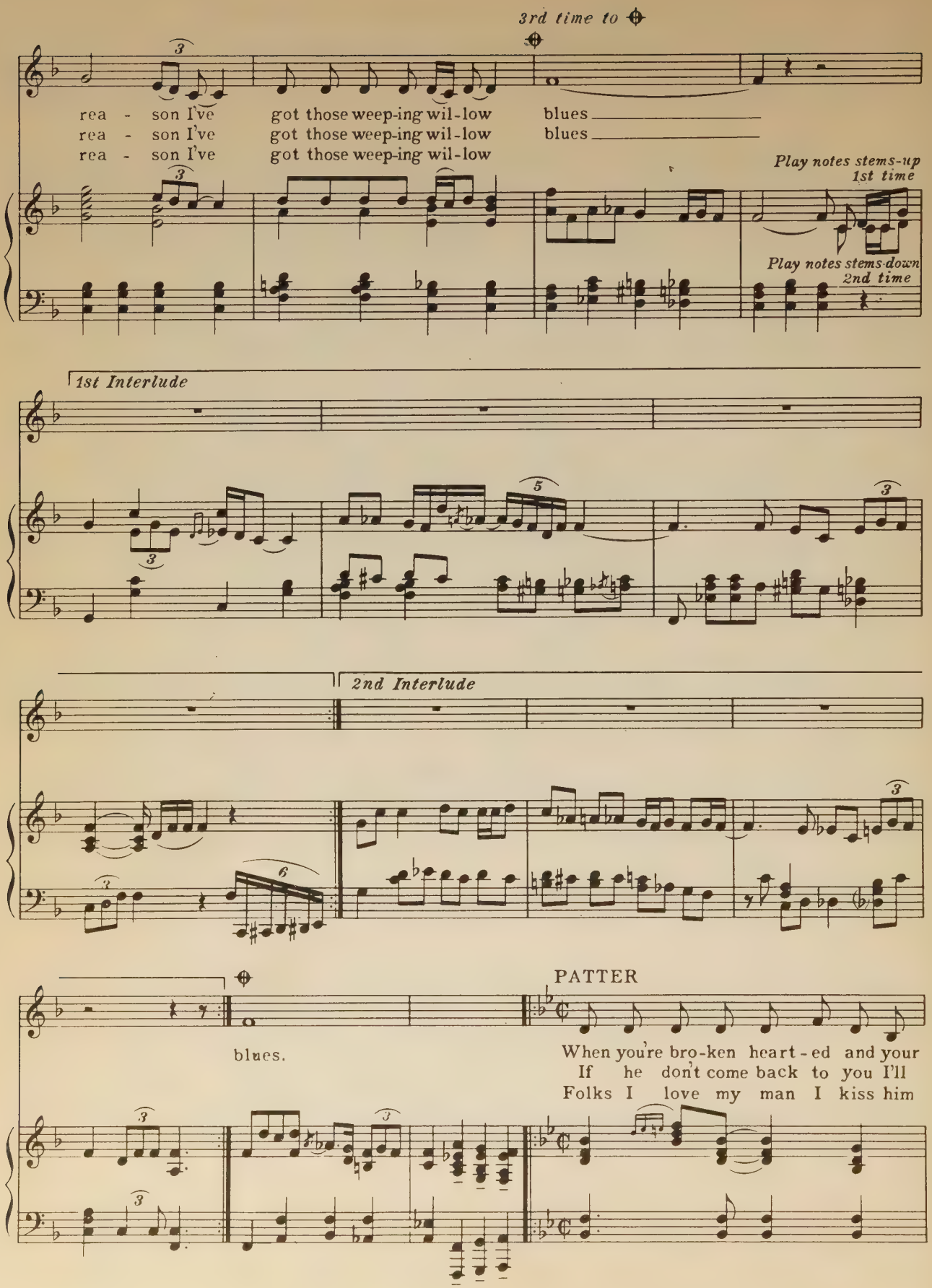
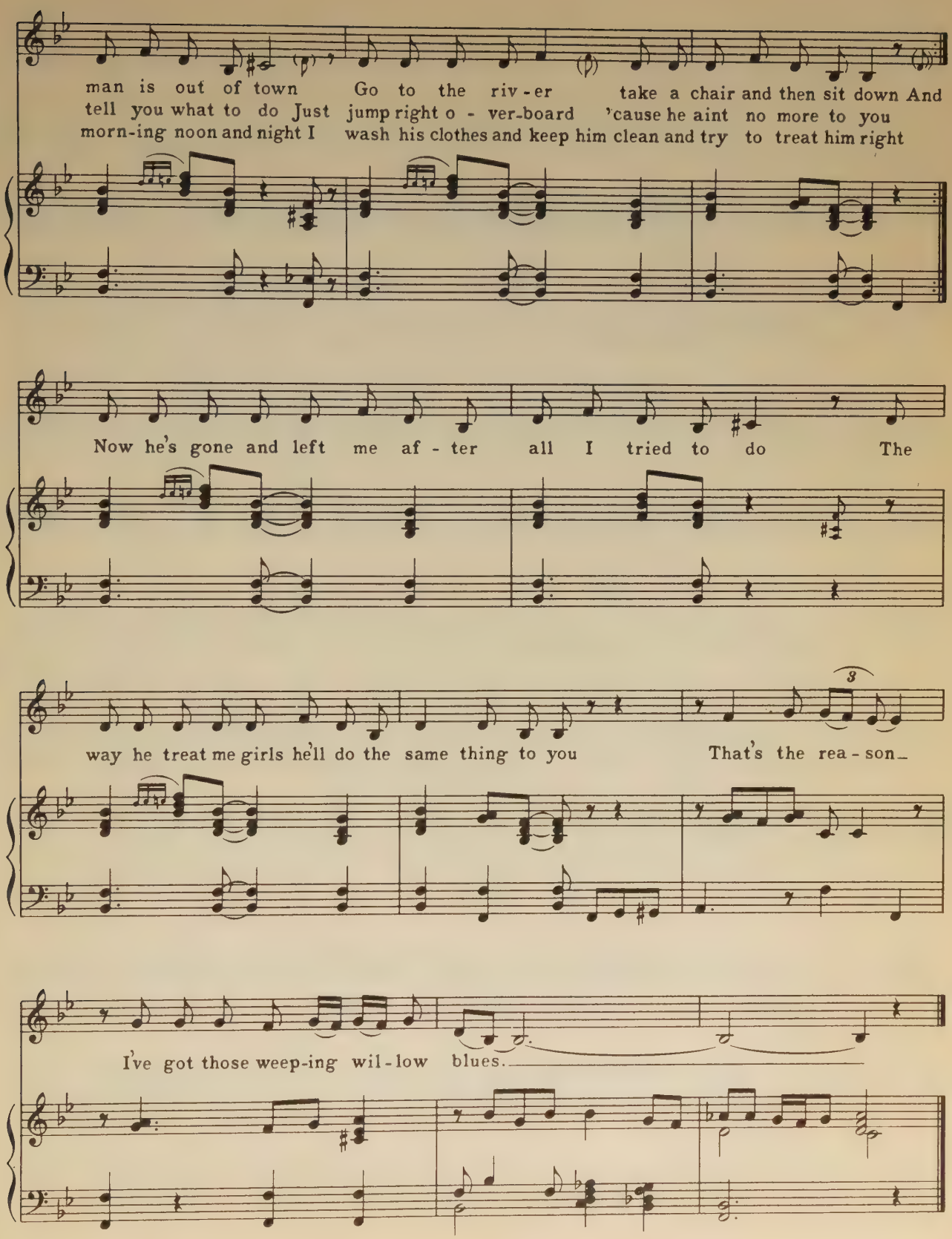
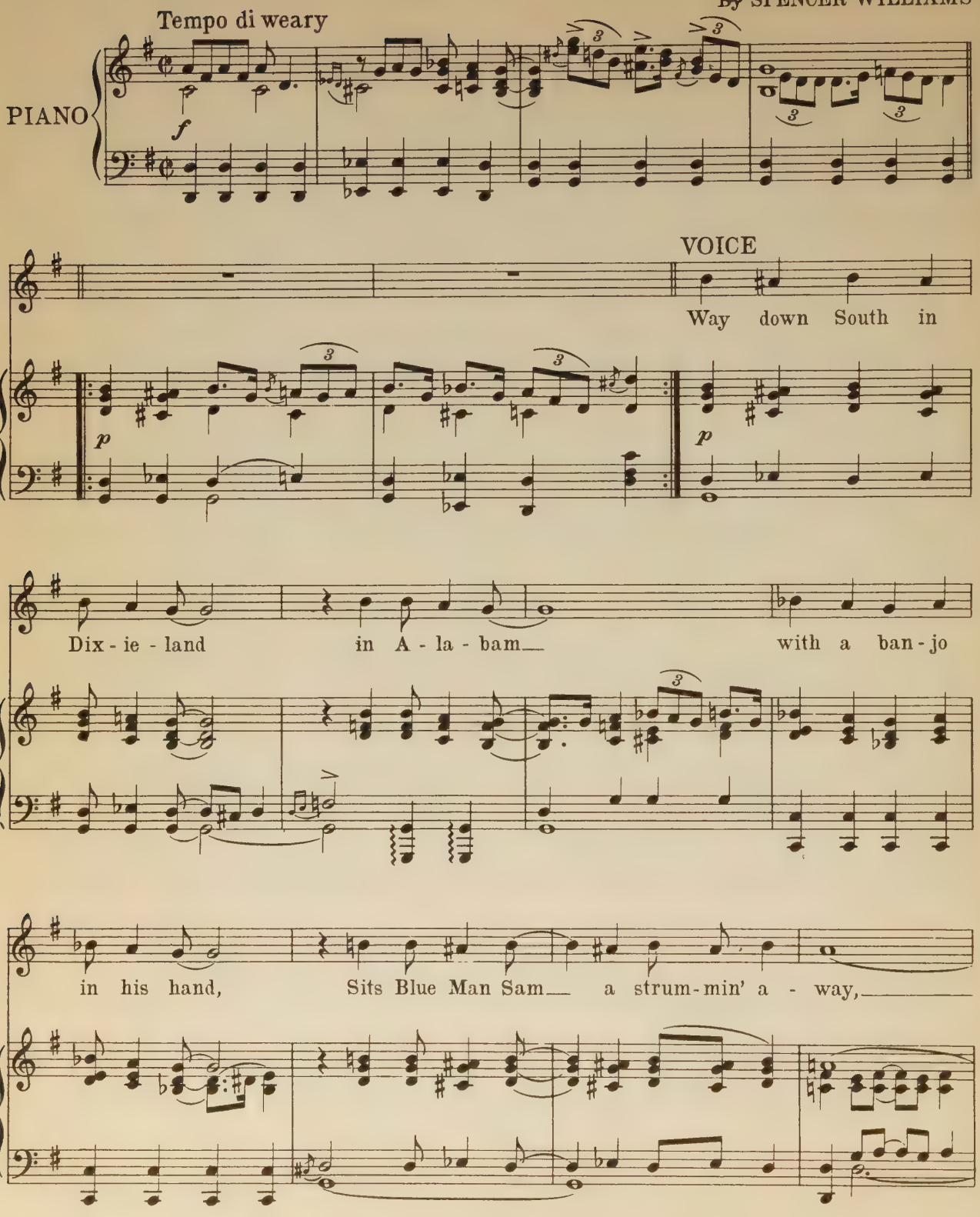

3rd time to
rea - son I've got those weep-ing wil-low blues
rea - son I've got those weep-ing wil-low blues
rea - son I've got those weep-ing wil-low
Play notes stems-up 1st time
Play notes stems-down 2nd time
1st Interlude
2nd Interlude
blues.
PATTER
When you're bro-ken heart-ed and your
If he don't come back to you I'll
Folks I love my man I kiss him


man is out of town Go to the riv-er take a chair and then sit down And
tell you what to do Just jump right o - ver-board 'cause he aint no more to you
morn-ing noon and night I wash his clothes and keep him clean and try to treat him right
Now he's gone and left me af - ter all I tried to do The
3
way he treat me girls he'll do the same thing to you That's the rea - son_
I've got those weep-ing wil-low blues.

BANJO BLUES

By SPENCER WILLIAMS



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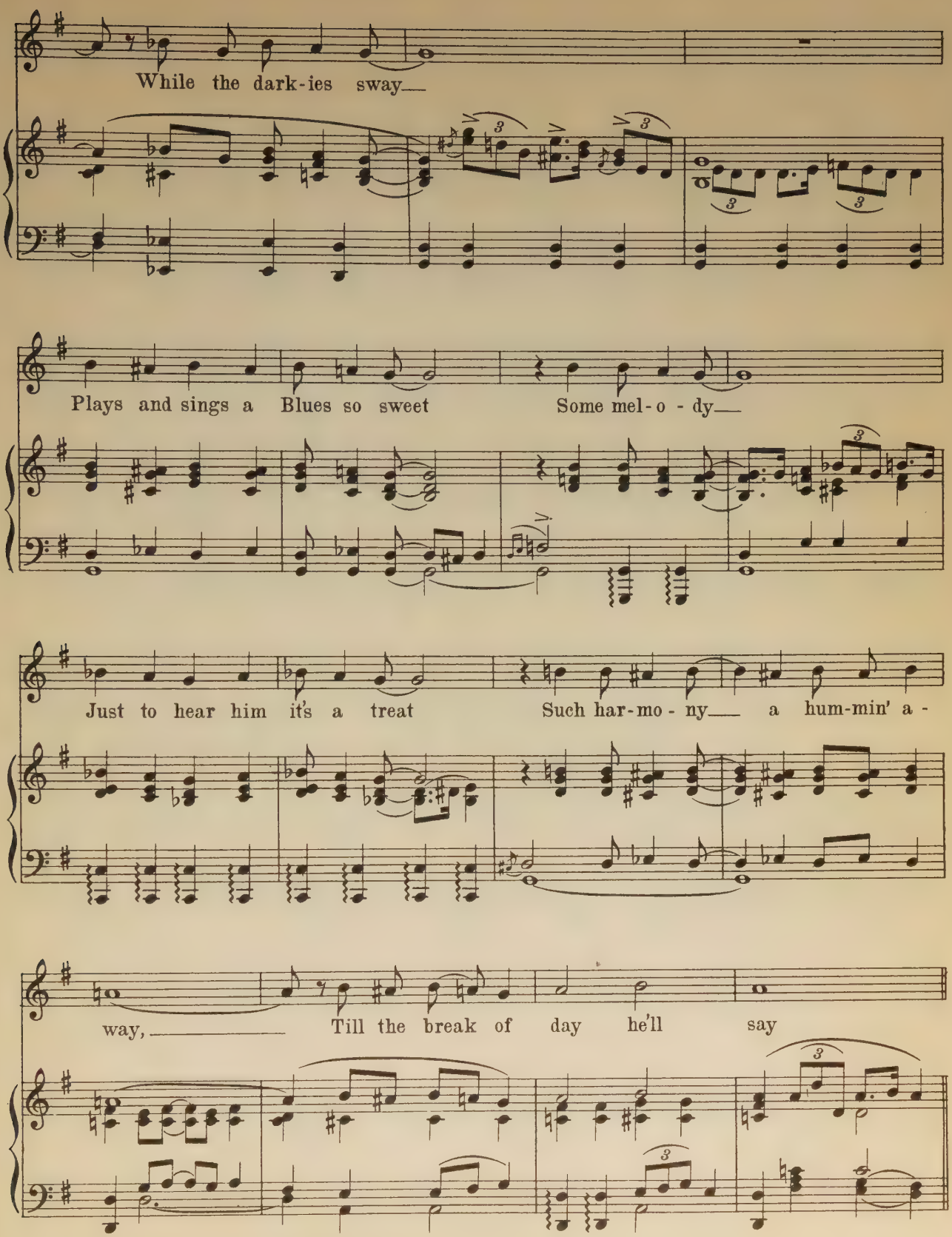
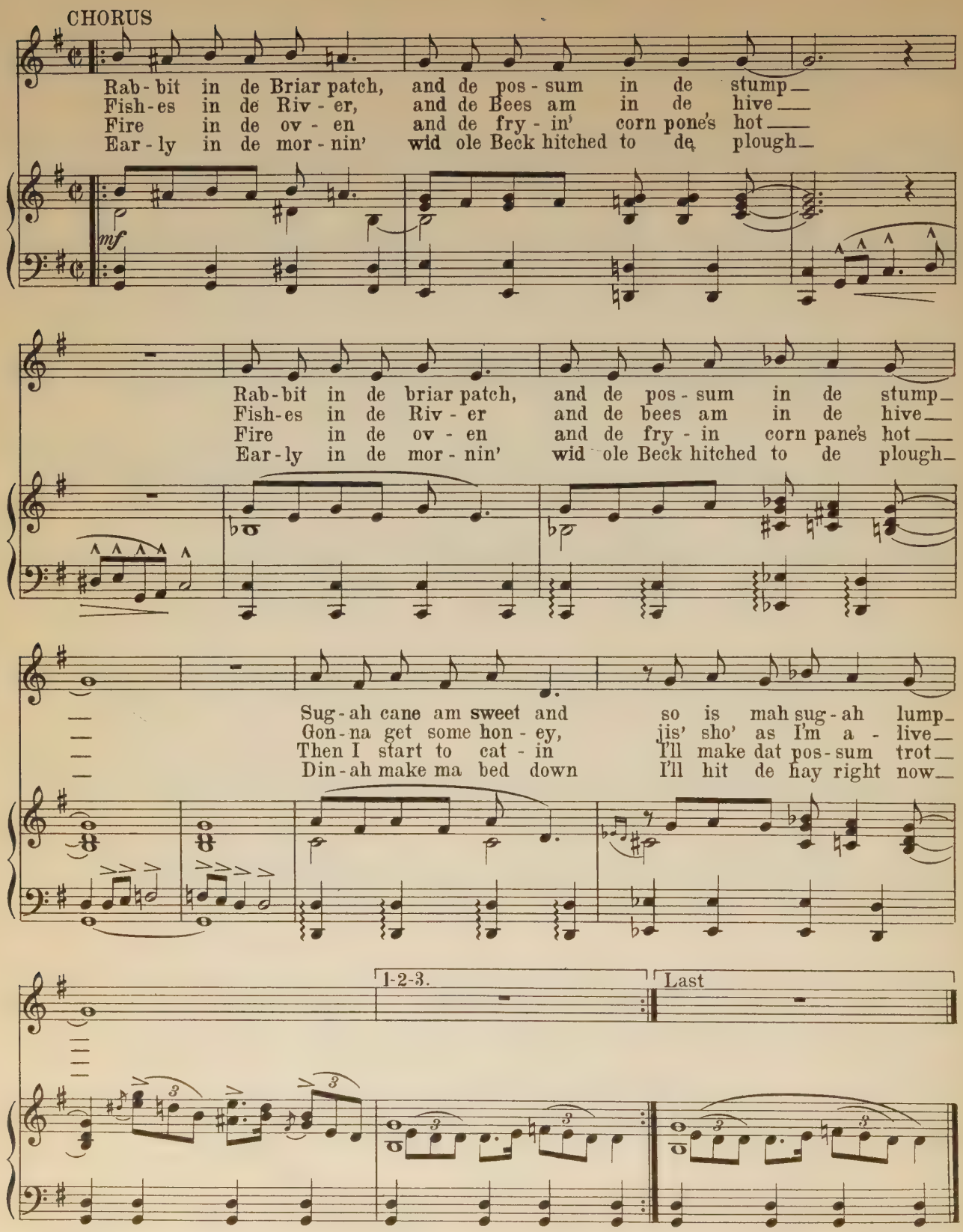
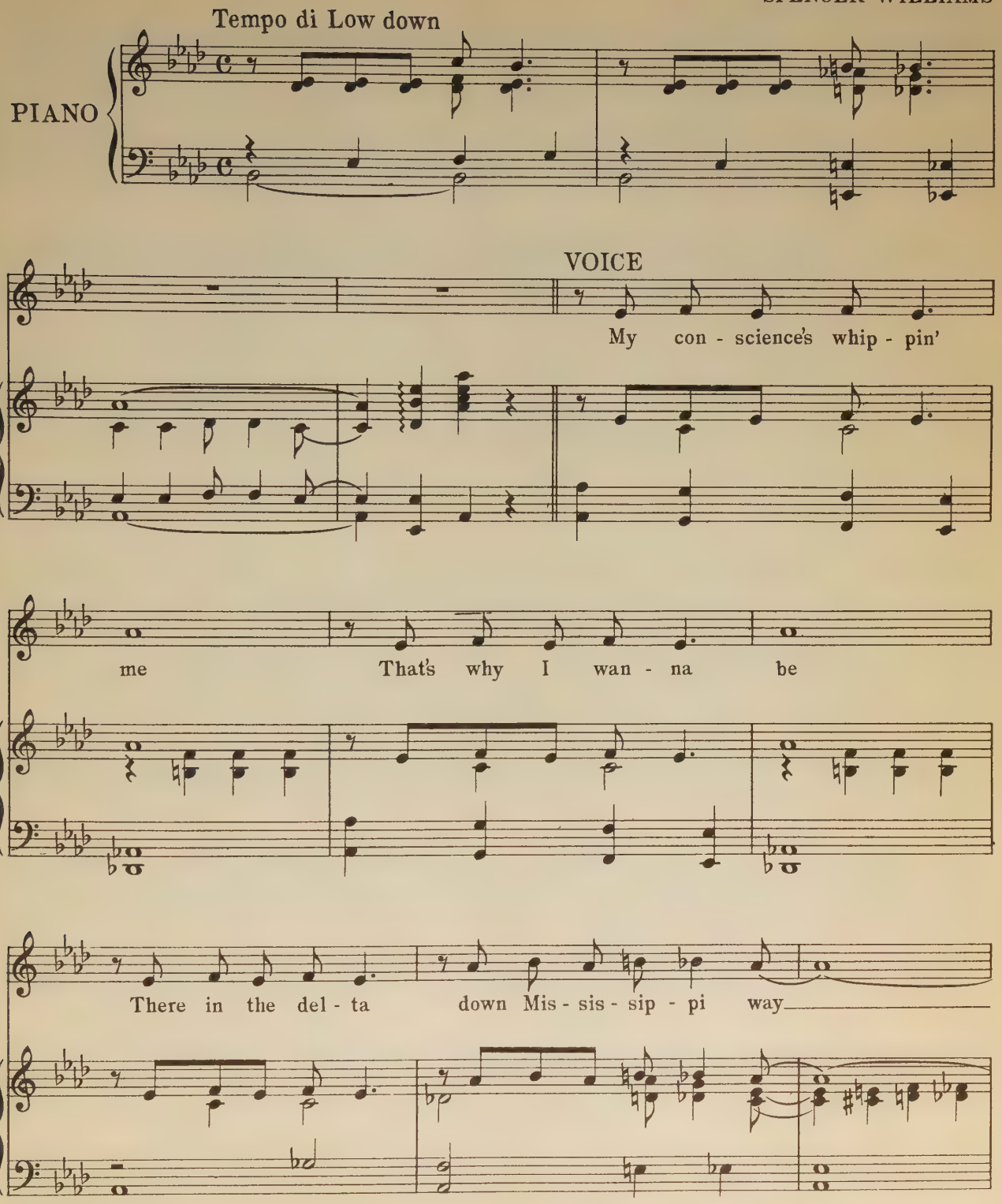

While the dark-ies sway—
Plays and sings a Blues so sweet
Some mel-o - dy—
Just to hear him it's a treat
Such har-mo - ny— a hum-min' a -
way, —
Till the break of day he'll say

CHORUS
Rab-bit in de Briar patch, and de pos-sum in de stump
Fish-es in de Riv-er, and de Bees am in de hive
Fire in de ov-en and de fry-in' corn pone's hot
Ear-ly in de mor-nin' wid ole Beck hitched to de plough
mf
Rab-bit in de briar patch, and de pos-sum in de stump
Fish-es in de Riv-er and de bees am in de hive
Fire in de ov-en and de fry-in corn pane's hot
Ear-ly in de mor-nin' wid ole Beck hitched to de plough
Sug-ah cane am sweet and so is mah sug-ah lump
Gon-na get some hon-ey, jis' sho' as I'm a-live
Then I start to cat-in I'll make dat pos-sum trot
Din-ah make ma bed down I'll hit de hay right now
1-2-3.
Last

Last Chorus:- Now the rain am fallin in ma feather bed I'll snooze
Now the rain am fallin in ma feather bed I'll snooze
Gonna go to sleep an dream away my Banjo blues

MISSISSIPPI BLUES
(BAMVILLE CROON)

SPENCER WILLIAMS



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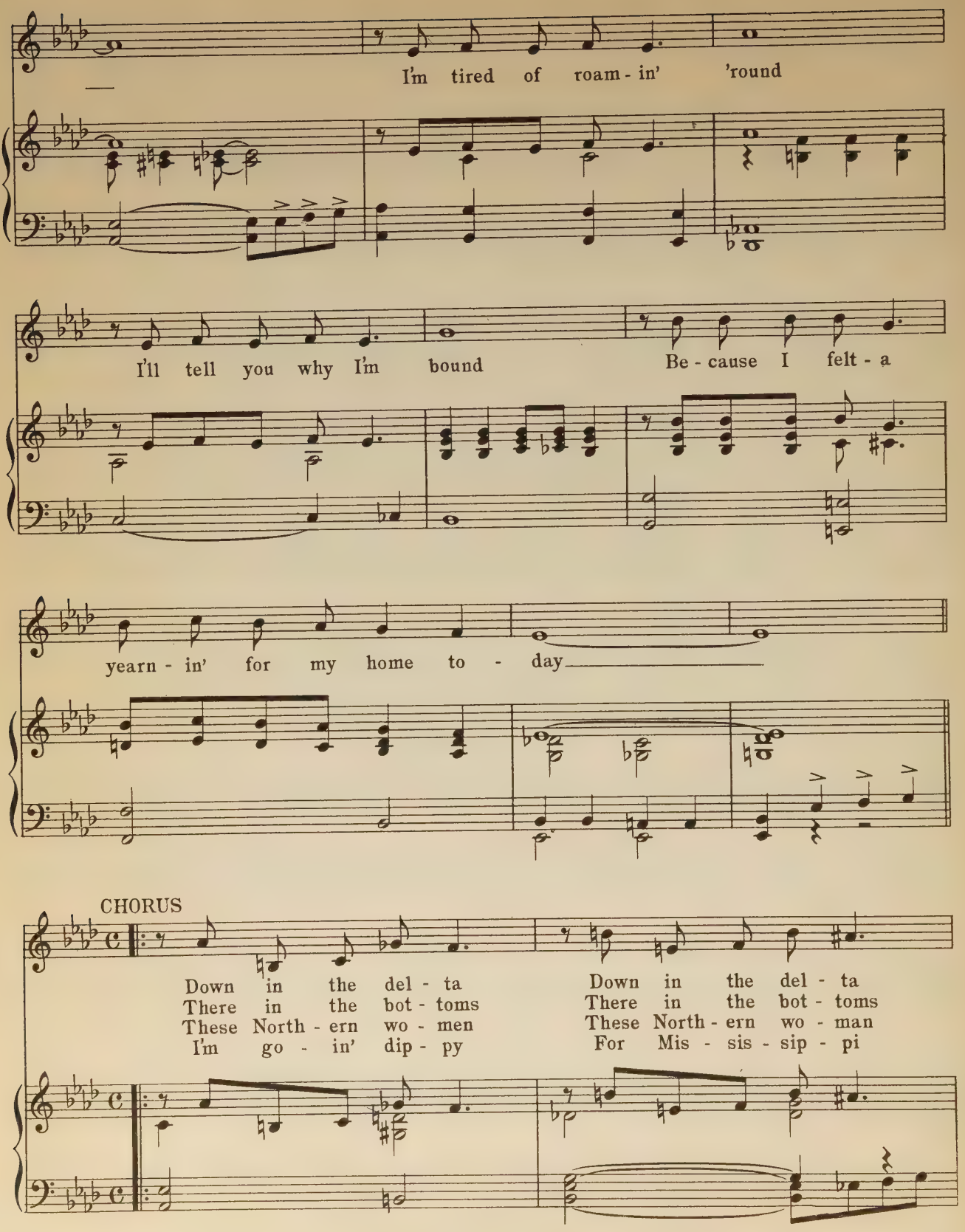
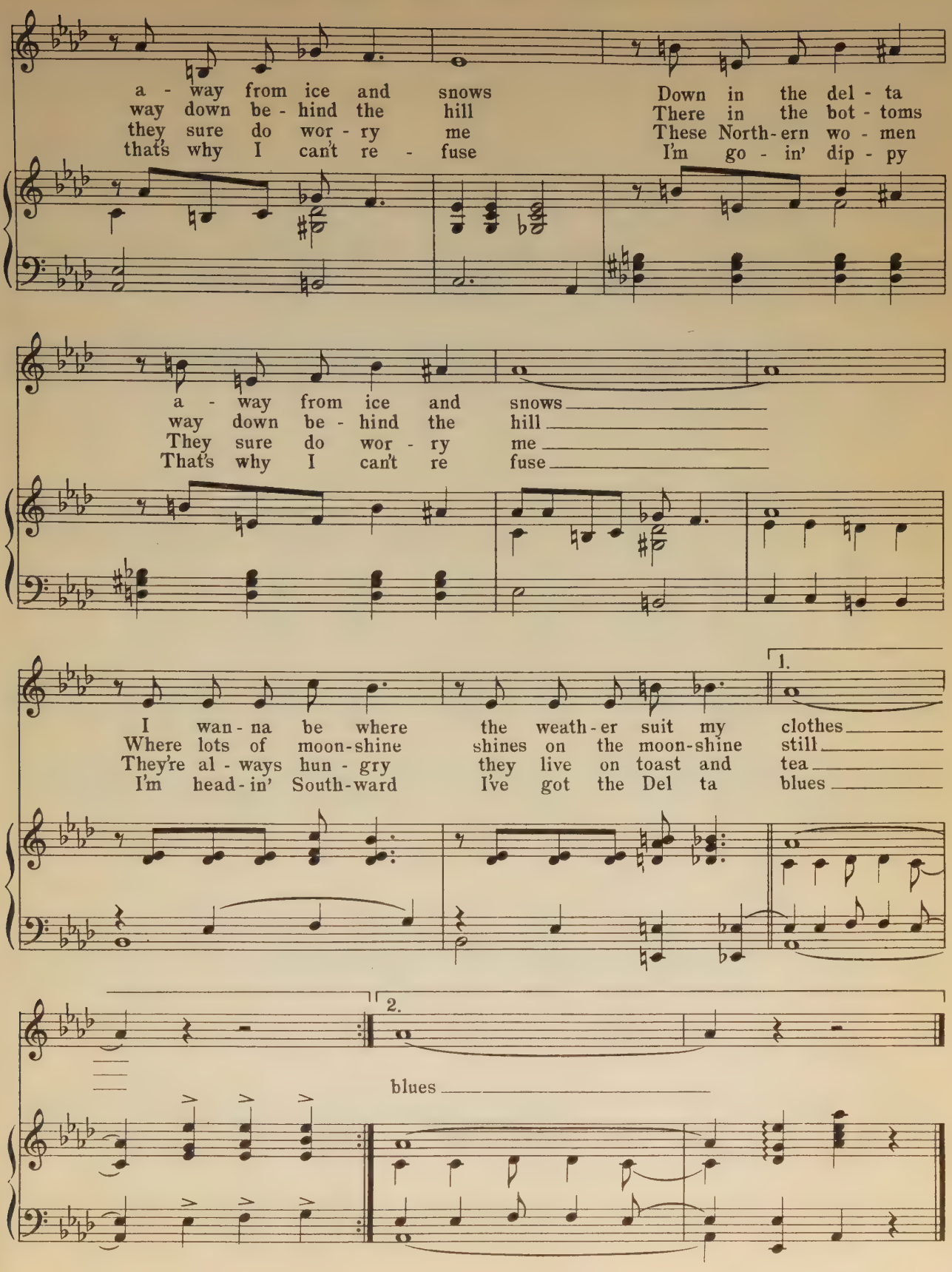
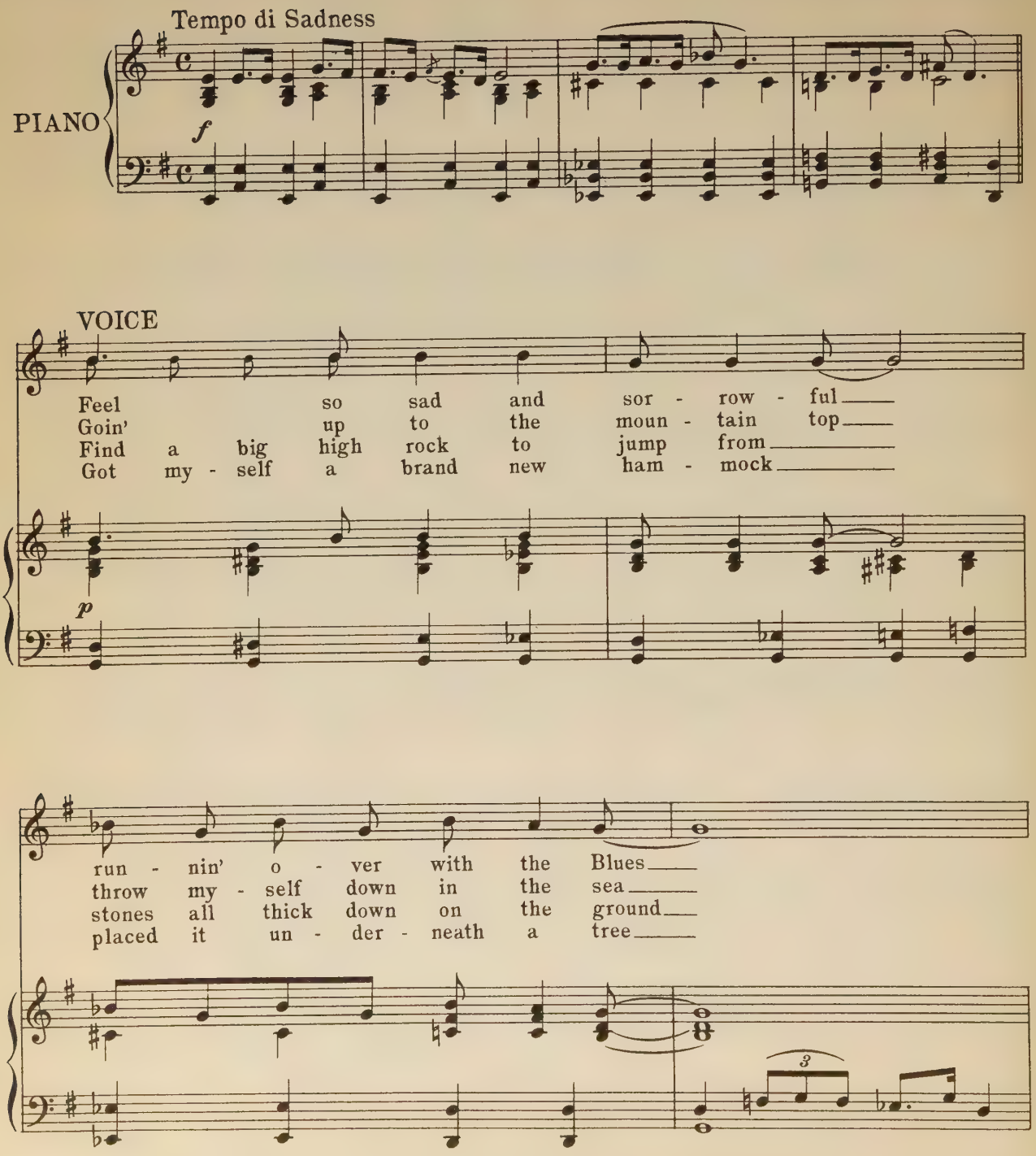

I'm tired of roam - in' 'round
I'll tell you why I'm bound
Be - cause I felt - a
yearn - in' for my home to - day
CHORUS
Down in the del - ta
There in the bot - toms
These North - ern wo - men
I'm go - in' dip - py
Down in the del - ta
There in the bot - toms
These North - ern wo - man
For Mis - sis - sip - pi


a - way from ice and snows
way down be - hind the hill
they sure do wor - ry me
that's why I can't re - fuse
Down in the del - ta
There in the bot - toms
These North - ern wo - men
I'm go - in' dip - py
a - way from ice and snows
way down be - hind the hill
They sure do wor - ry me
That's why I can't re fuse
1.
I wan - na be where the weath - er suit my clothes
Where lots of moon - shine shines on the moon - shine still
They're al - ways hun - gry they live on toast and tea
I'm head - in' South - ward I've got the Del ta blues
2.
blues

MOUNTAIN TOP BLUES
(BLUE MAMA'S SUICIDE WAIL)

Words and Music by
SPENCER WILLIAMS

Tempo di Sadness
PIANO
f
VOICE
Feel so sad and sor - row - ful
Goin' up to the moun - tain top
Find a big high rock to jump from
Got my - self a brand new ham - mock
p
run - nin' o - ver with the Blues
throw my - self down in the sea
stones all thick down on the ground
placed it un - der - neath a tree
3

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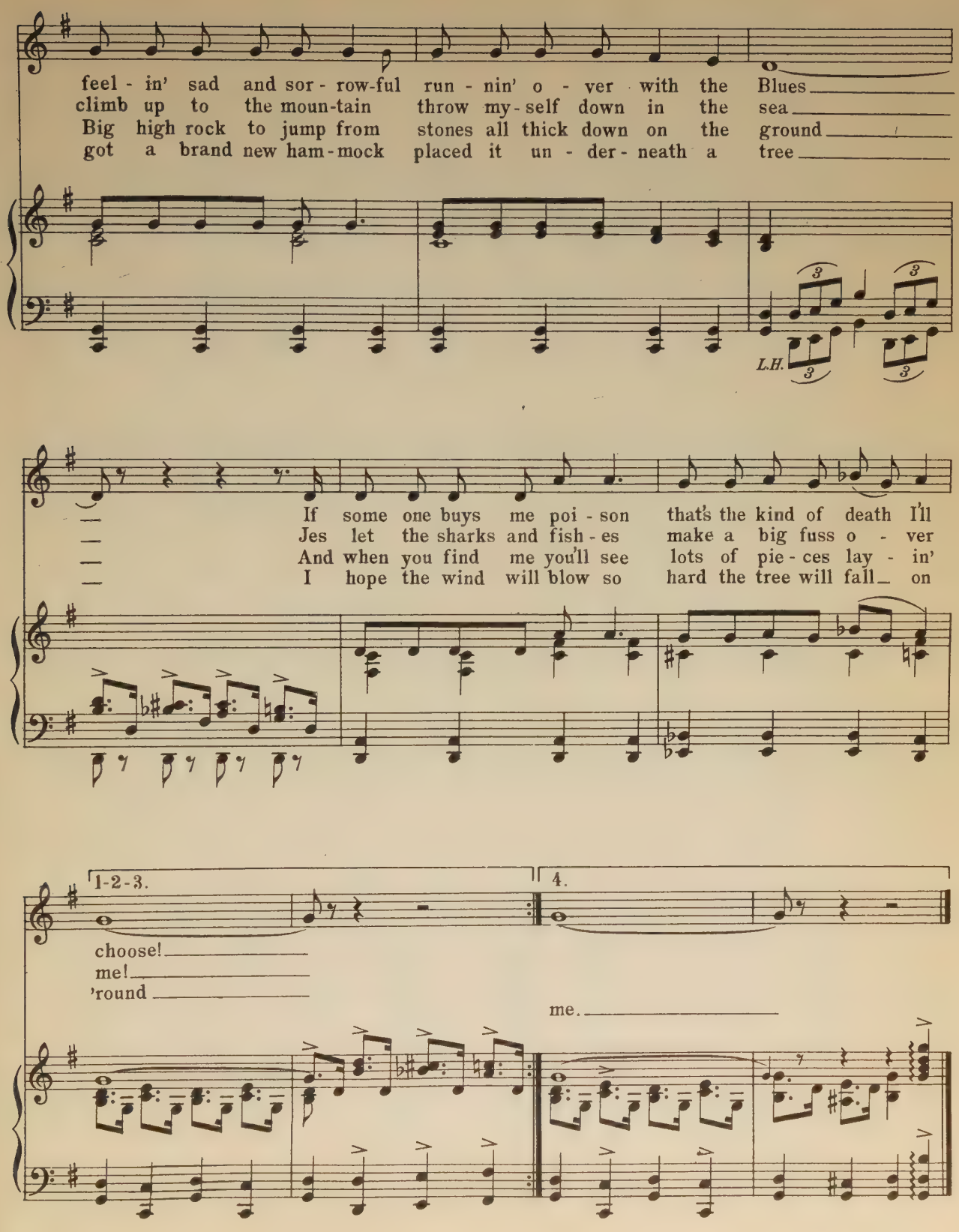
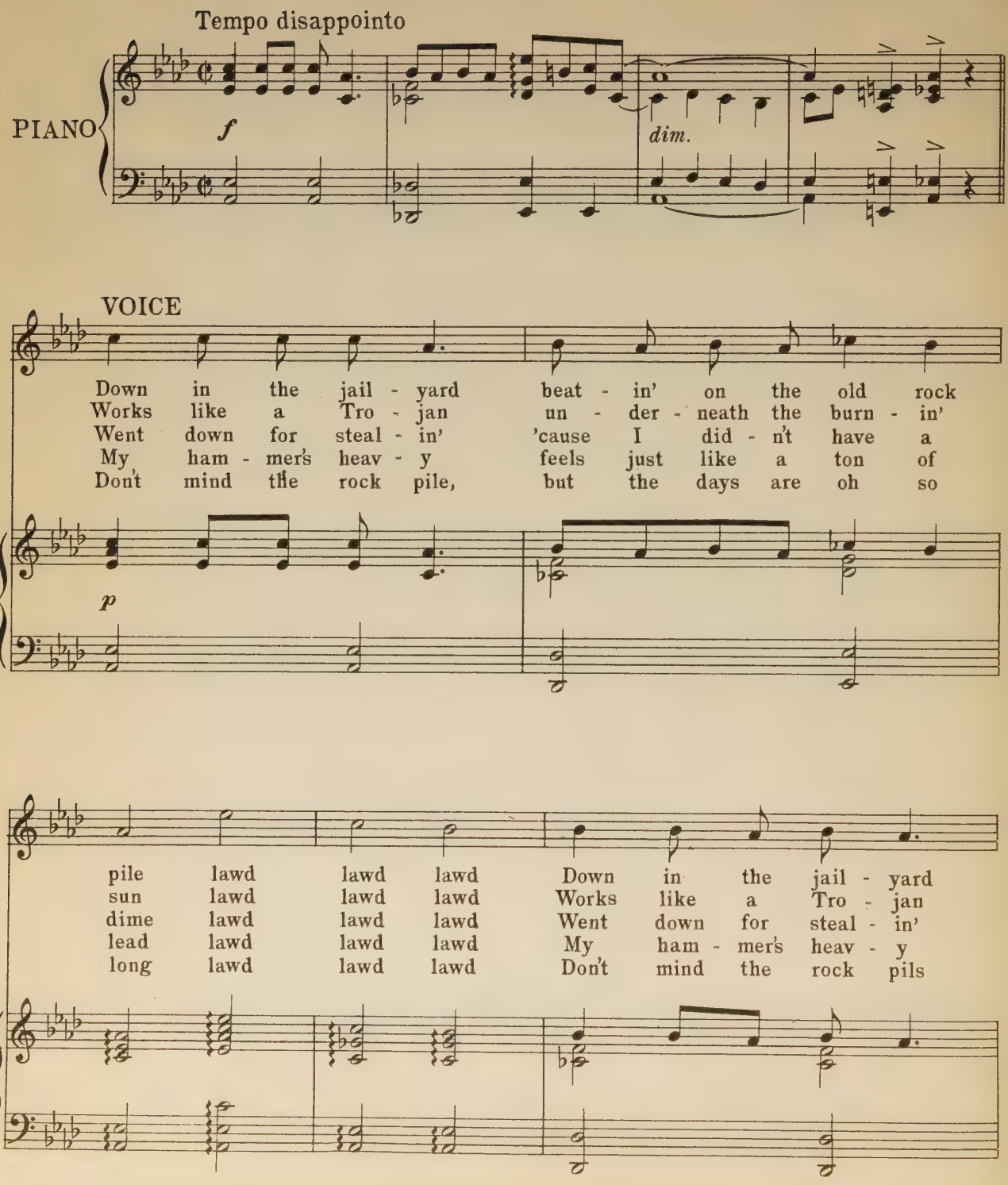

feel - in' sad and sor - row-ful run - nin' o - ver with the Blues
climb up to the moun-tain throw my-self down in the sea
Big high rock to jump from stones all thick down on the ground
got a brand new ham-mock placed it un - der- neath a tree
L.H.
If some one buys me poi - son that's the kind of death I'll
Jes let the sharks and fish - es make a big fuss o - ver
And when you find me you'll see lots of pie - ces lay - in'
I hope the wind will blow so hard the tree will fall on
1-2-3.
4.
choose!
me!
'round
me.

ROCK PILE BLUES
(MAMA'S PRISON YARD BLUES)

SPENCER WILLIAMS


Tempo disappointo
PIANO
f
dim.
VOICE
Down in the jail - yard beat - in' on the old rock
Works like a Tro - jan un - der - neath the burn - in'
Went down for steal - in' 'cause I did - n't have a
My ham - mer's heav - y feels just like a ton of
Don't mind the rock pile, but the days are oh so
p
pile lawd lawd lawd Down in the jail - yard
sun lawd lawd lawd Works like a Tro - jan
dime lawd lawd lawd Went down for steal - in'
lead lawd lawd lawd My ham - mer's heav - y
long lawd lawd lawd Don't mind the rock pils

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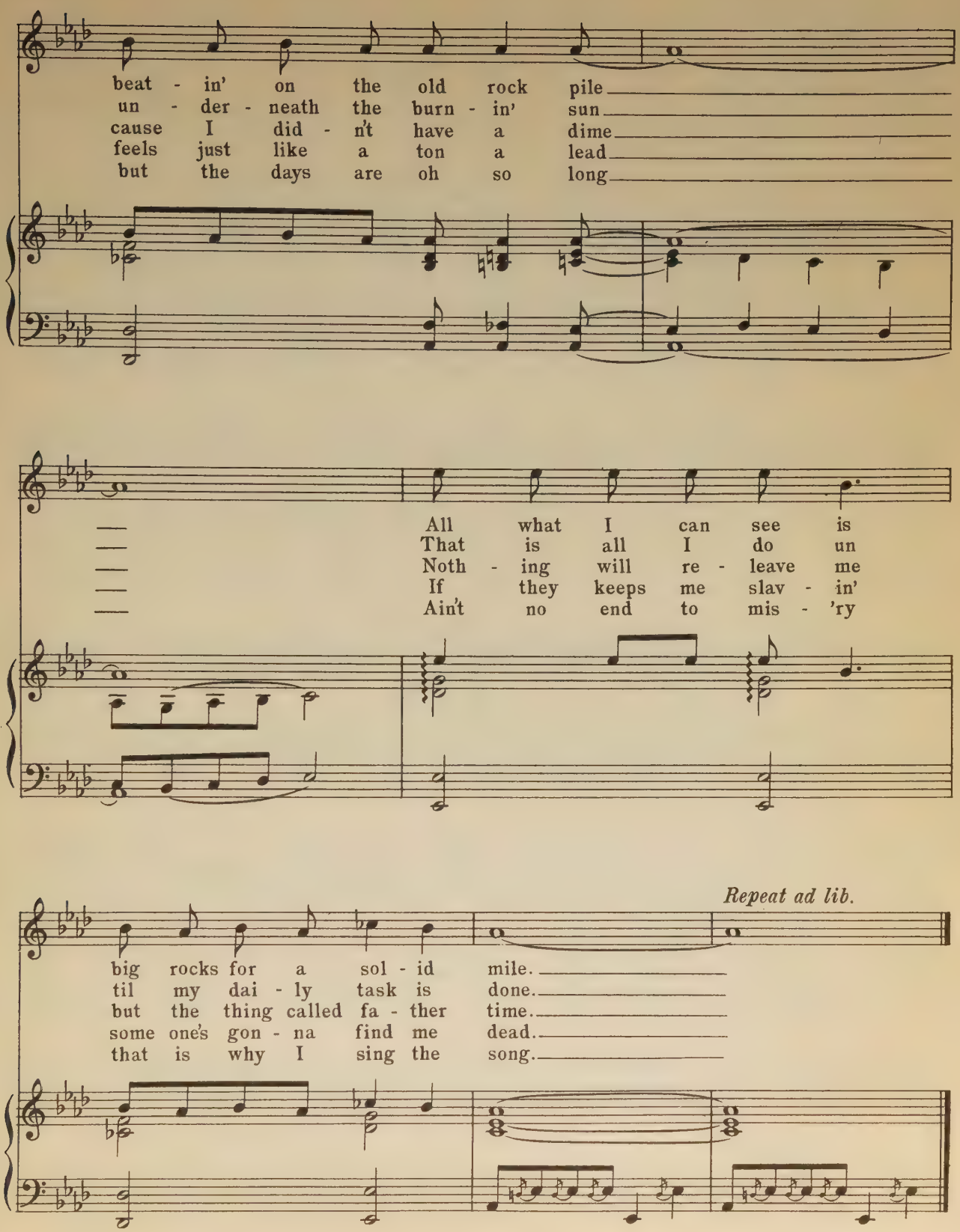
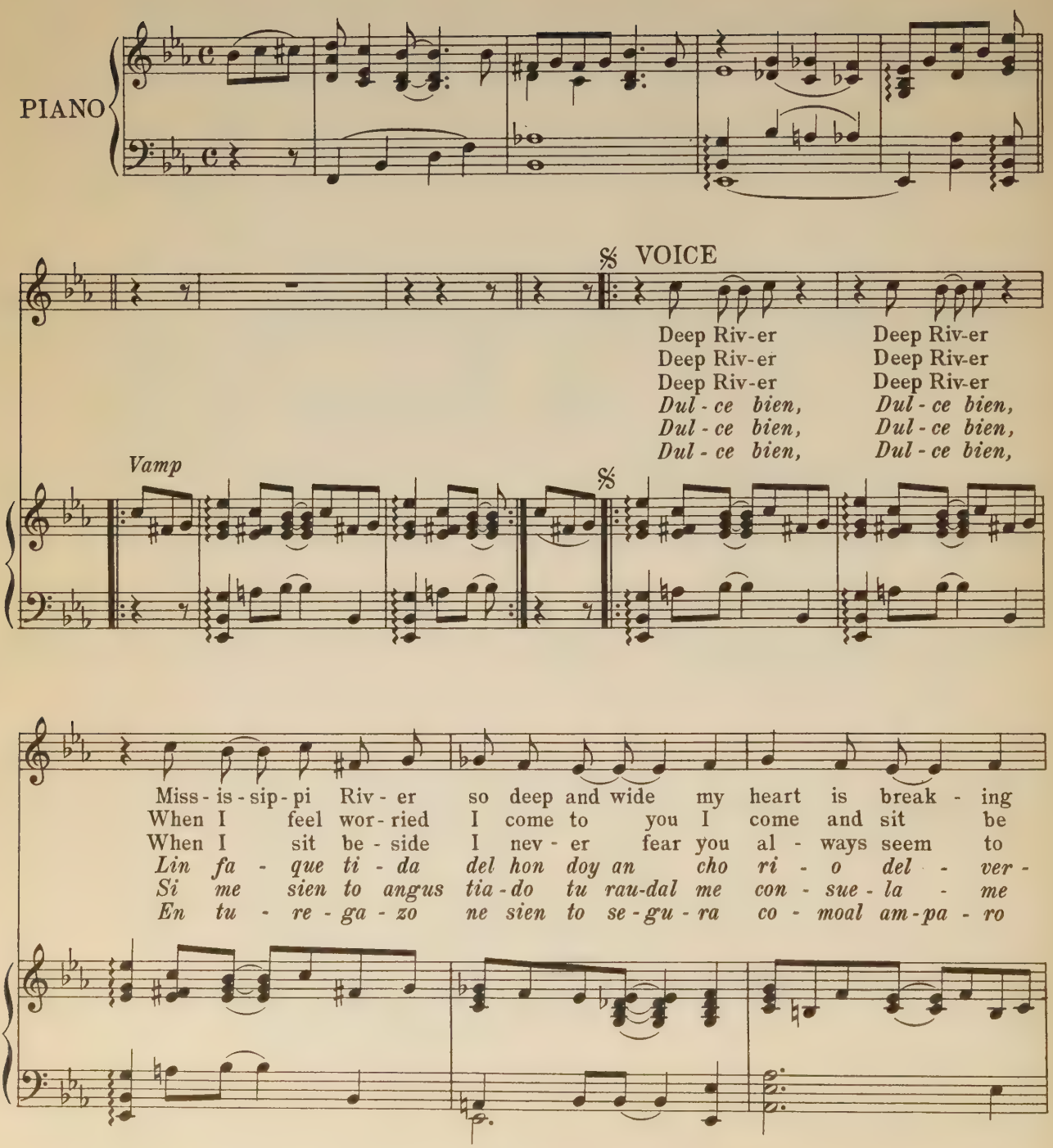

beat - in' on the old rock pile
un - der - neath the burn - in' sun
cause I did - n't have a dime
feels just like a ton a lead
but the days are oh so long
All what I can see is
That is all I do un
Noth - ing will re - leave me
If they keeps me slav - in'
Ain't no end to mis - 'ry
Repeat ad lib.
big rocks for a sol - id mile.
til my dai - ly task is done.
but the thing called fa - ther time.
some one's gon - na find me dead.
that is why I sing the song.

DEEP RIVER BLUES

Words by
EDDIE GREEN

Music by
LUCILE MARIE HANDY


PIANO
VOICE
Deep Riv-er Deep Riv-er
Deep Riv-er Deep Riv-er
Deep Riv-er Deep Riv-er
Dul - ce bien, Dul - ce bien,
Dul - ce bien, Dul - ce bien,
Dul - ce bien, Dul - ce bien,
Vamp
Miss - is - sip - pi Riv - er so deep and wide my heart is break - ing
When I feel wor - ried I come to you I come and sit be
When I sit be - side I nev - er fear you al - ways seem to
Lin fa - que ti - da del hon doy an cho ri - o del - ver -
Si me sien to angus tia - do tu rau-dal me con - sue - la - me
En tu - re - ga - zo ne sien to se - gu - ra co - moal am - pa - ro

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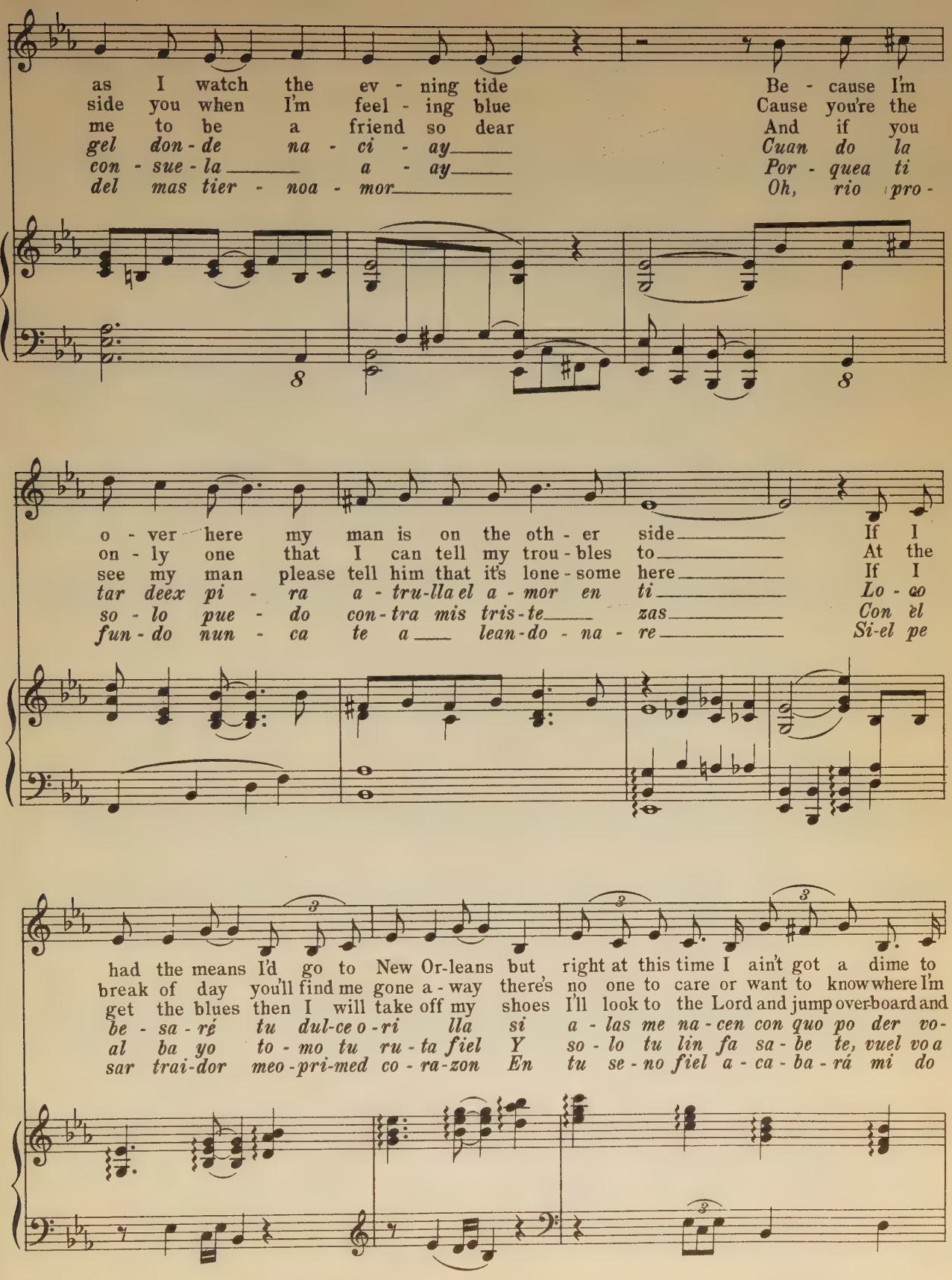
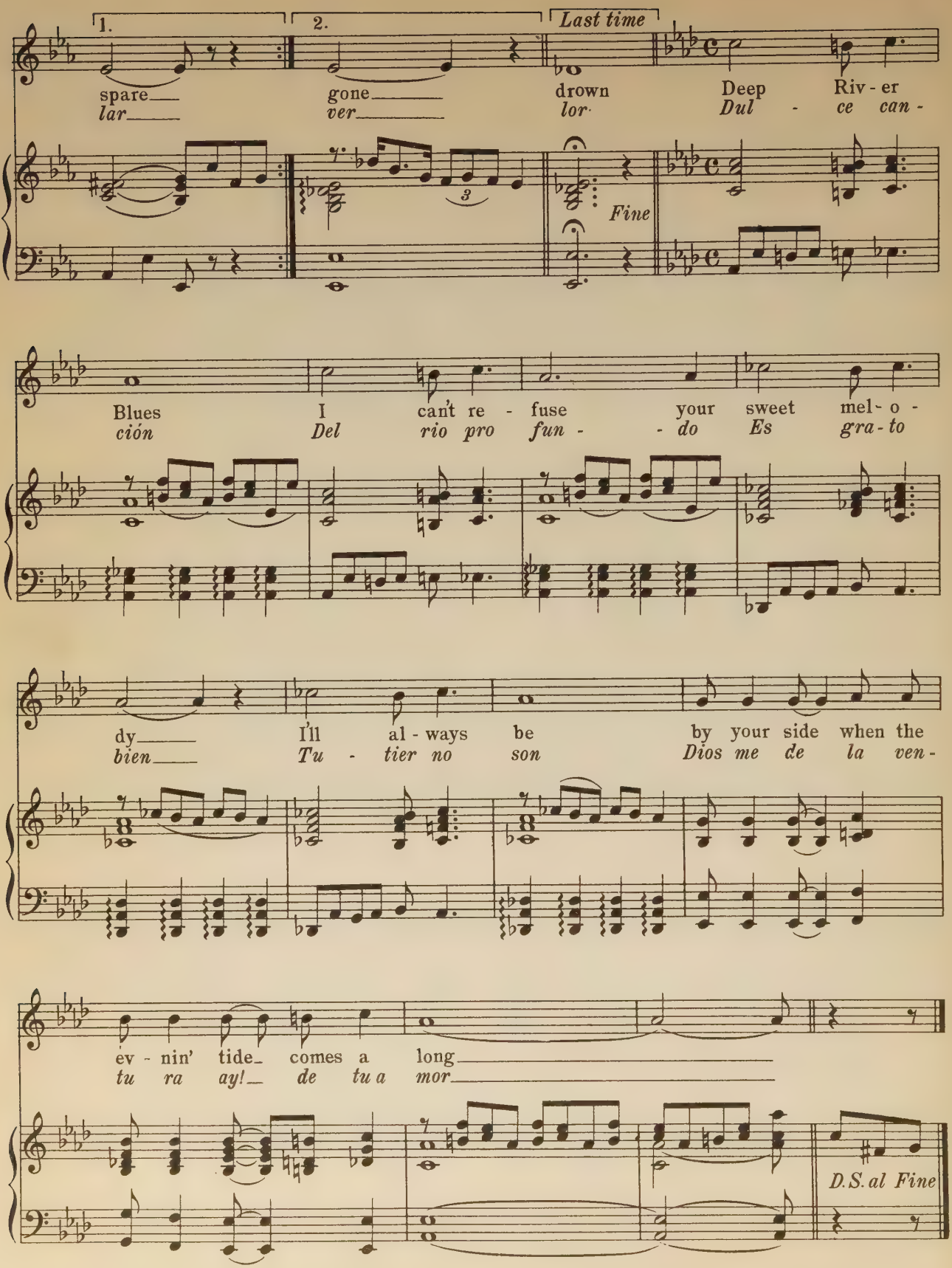
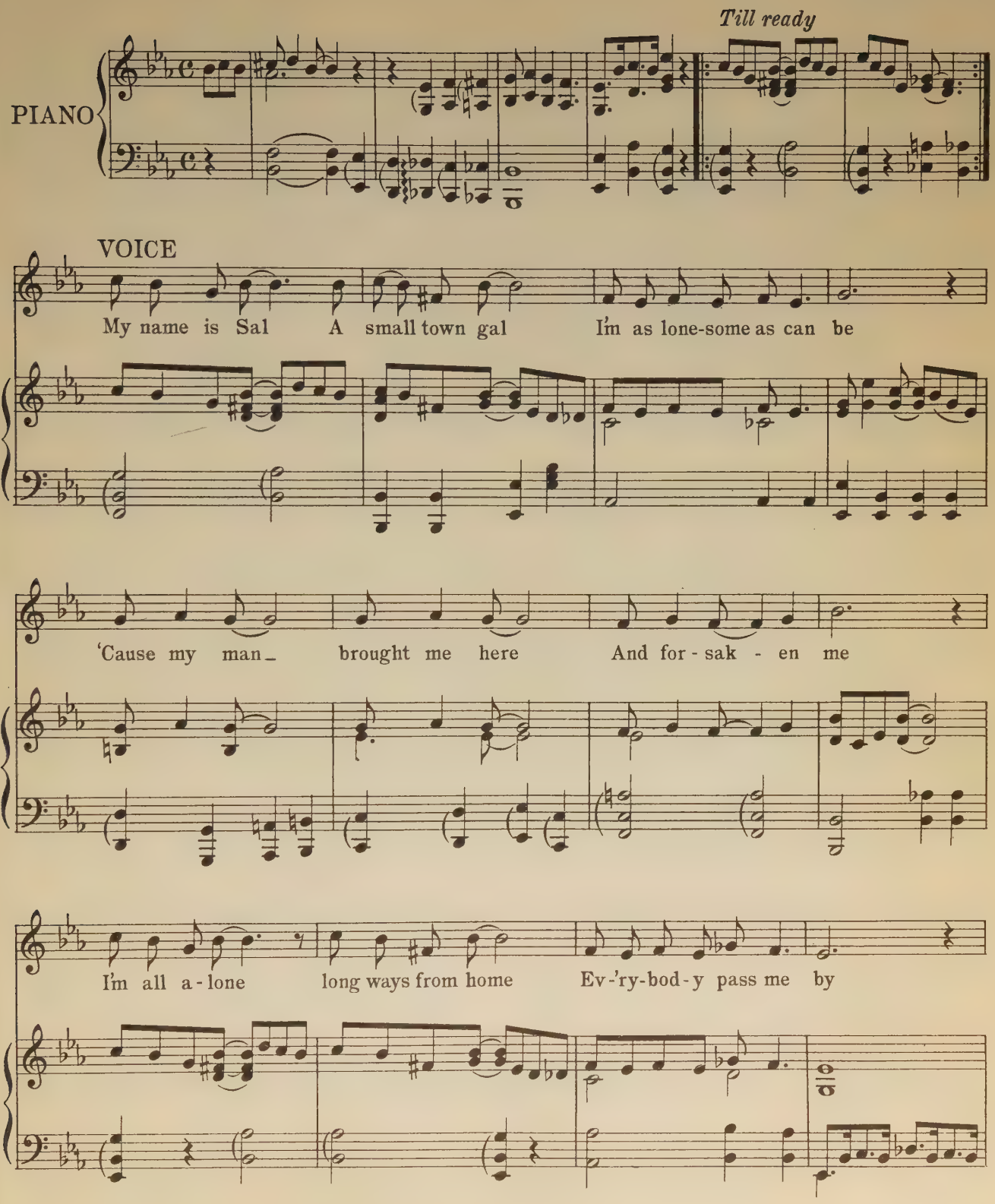

as I watch the ev - ning tide Be - cause I'm
side you when I'm feel - ing blue Cause you're the
me to be a friend so dear And if you
gel don - de na - ci - ay Cuan do la
con - sue - la a - ay Por - quea ti
del mas tier - noa - mor Oh, rio pro -
o - ver here my man is on the oth - er side If I
on - ly one that I can tell my trou - bles to At the
see my man please tell him that it's lone - some here If I
tar deex pi - ra a - tru-lla el a - mor en ti Lo - co
so - lo pue - do con - tra mis tris - te zas Con el
fun - do nun - ca te a lean - do - na - re Si-el pe
had the means I'd go to New Or-leans but right at this time I ain't got a dime to
break of day you'll find me gone a - way there's no one to care or want to know where I'm
get the blues then I will take off my shoes I'll look to the Lord and jump overboard and
be - sa - ré tu dul-ce o - ri lla si a - las me na - cen con quo po der vo -
al ba yo to - mo tu ru - ta fiel Y so - lo tu lin fa sa - be te, vuel vo a
sar trai-dor meo-pri-med co - ra-zon En tu se - no fiel a - ca - ba - rá mi do


1.
2.
Last time
spare
lar
gone
ver
drown
lor
Deep Riv - er
Dul - ce can -
Fine
Blues
ción
I can't re - fuse your sweet mel - o -
Del rio pro fun - - do Es gra - to
dy
bien
I'll al - ways be by your side when the
Tu - tier no son Dios me de la ven -
ev - nin' tide comes a long
tu ra ay! de tu a mor
D.S. al Fine

THE BLUES I'VE GOT

By N.E. REED
and
ETHEL NEAL


Till ready
PIANO
VOICE
My name is Sal A small town gal I'm as lone-some as can be
'Cause my man_ brought me here And for - sak - en me
I'm all a - lone long ways from home Ev-'ry-bod - y pass me by

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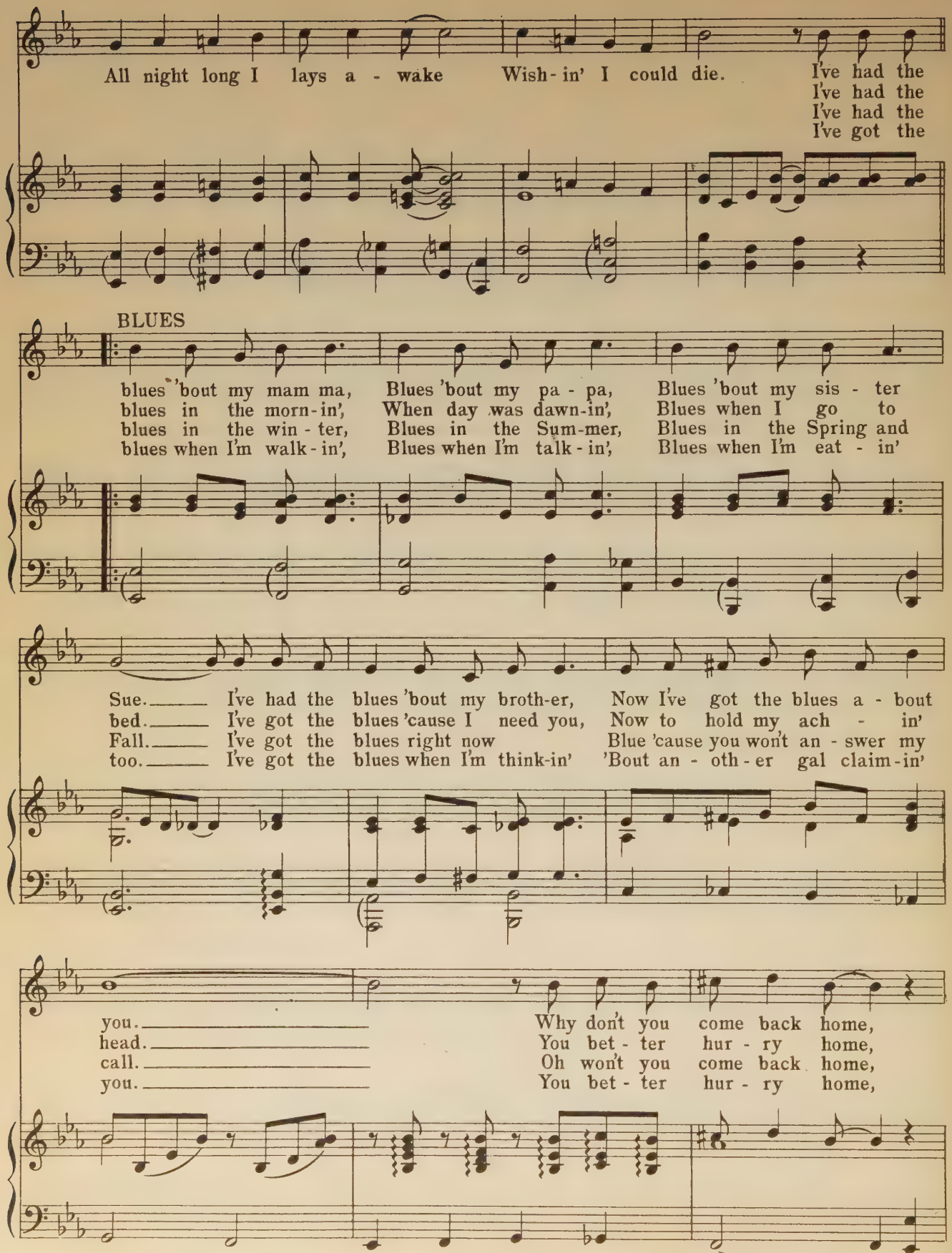
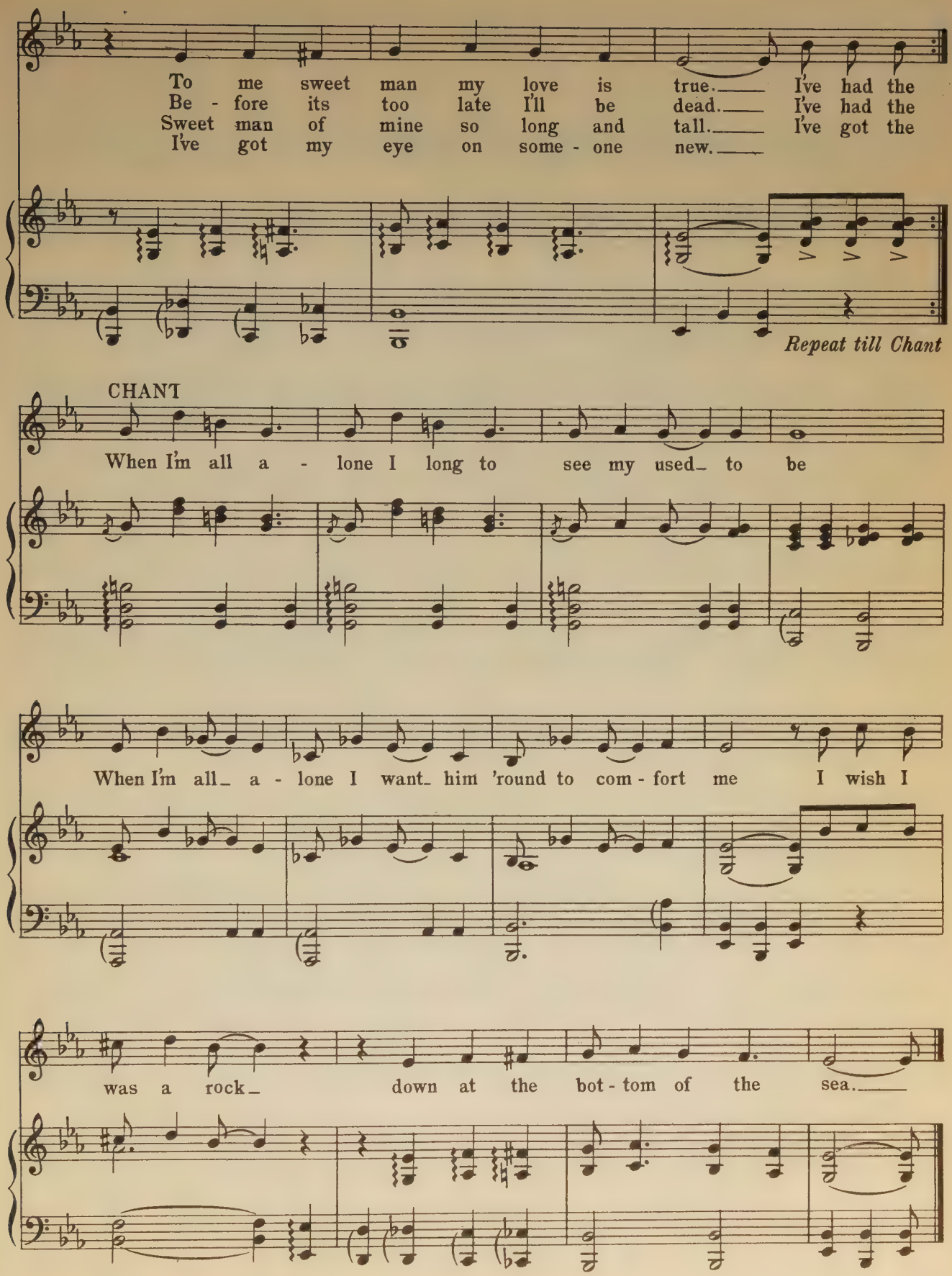
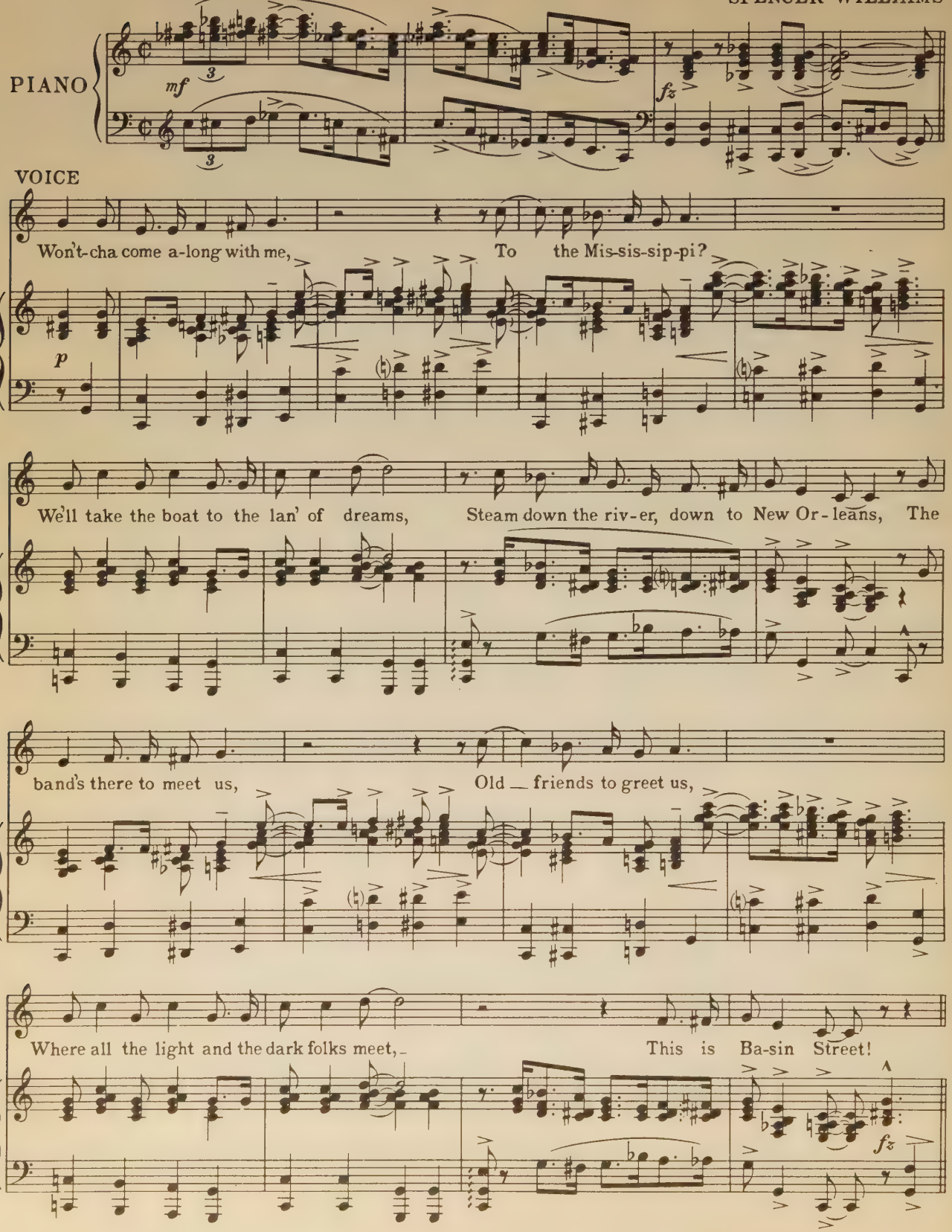

All night long I lays a - wake Wish-in' I could die. I've had the
I've had the
I've had the
I've got the
BLUES
blues 'bout my mam ma, Blues 'bout my pa - pa, Blues 'bout my sis - ter
blues in the morn-in', When day was dawn-in', Blues when I go to
blues in the win - ter, Blues in the Sum-mer, Blues in the Spring and
blues when I'm walk-in', Blues when I'm talk - in', Blues when I'm eat - in'
Sue. I've had the blues 'bout my broth-er, Now I've got the blues a - bout
bed. I've got the blues 'cause I need you, Now to hold my ach - in'
Fall. I've got the blues right now Blue 'cause you won't an - swer my
too. I've got the blues when I'm think-in' 'Bout an - oth - er gal claim-in'
you. Why don't you come back home,
head. You bet - ter hur - ry home,
call. Oh won't you come back home,
you. You bet - ter hur - ry home,


To me sweet man my love is true. I've had the
Be - fore its too late I'll be dead. I've had the
Sweet man of mine so long and tall. I've got the
I've got my eye on some - one new.
Repeat till Chant
CHANT
When I'm all a - lone I long to see my used_ to be
When I'm all_ a - lone I want_ him 'round to com - fort me I wish I
was a rock_ down at the bot - tom of the sea.

BASIN STREET BLUES

Slow Blues Tempo

Words and Music by
SPENCER WILLIAMS


PIANO
mf
fz
VOICE
Won't-cha come a-long with me, To the Mis-sis-sip-pi?
p
We'll take the boat to the lan' of dreams, Steam down the riv-er, down to New Or-leans, The
band's there to meet us, Old — friends to greet us,
Where all the light and the dark folks meet, This is Ba-sin Street!
fz

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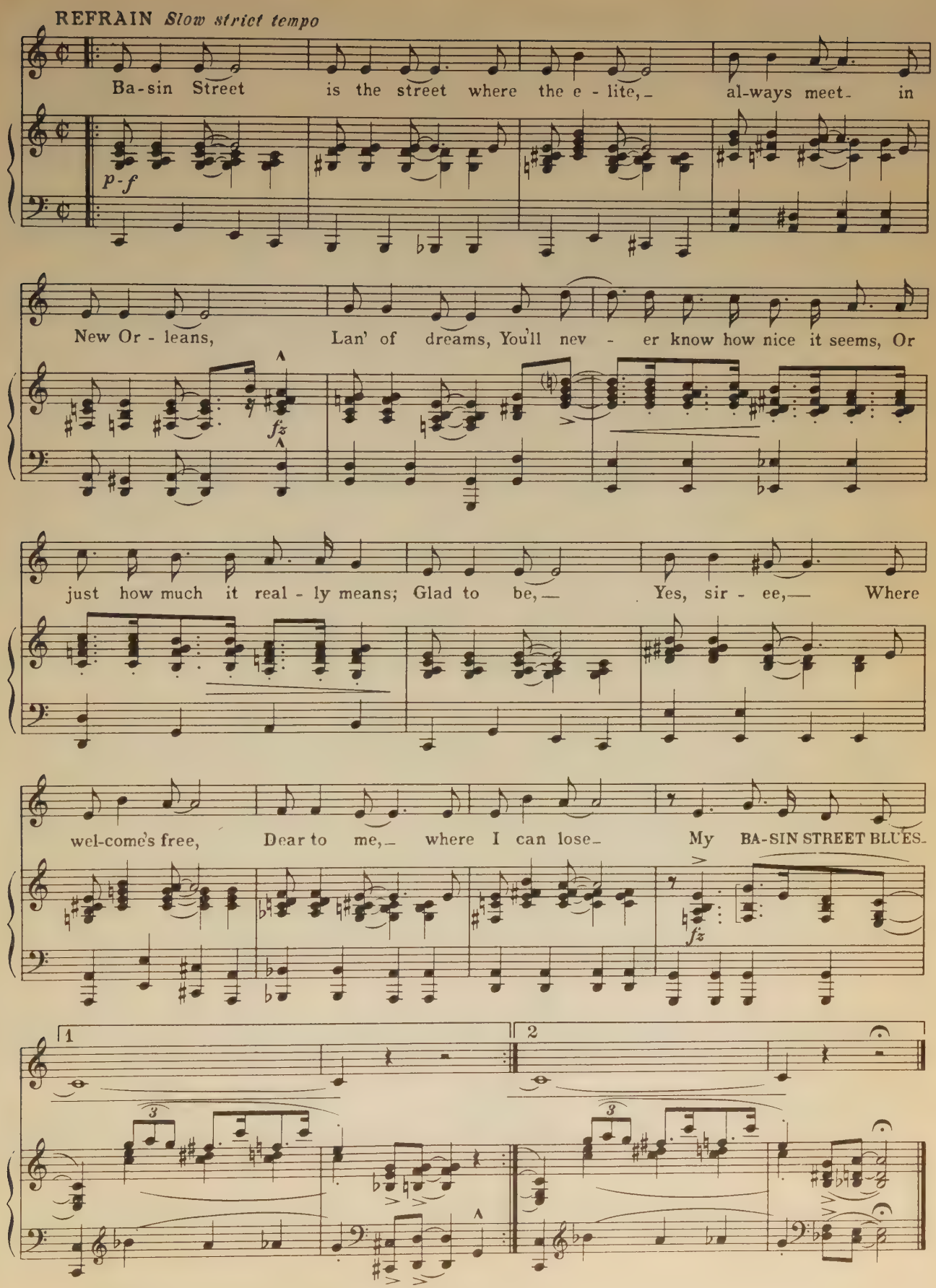
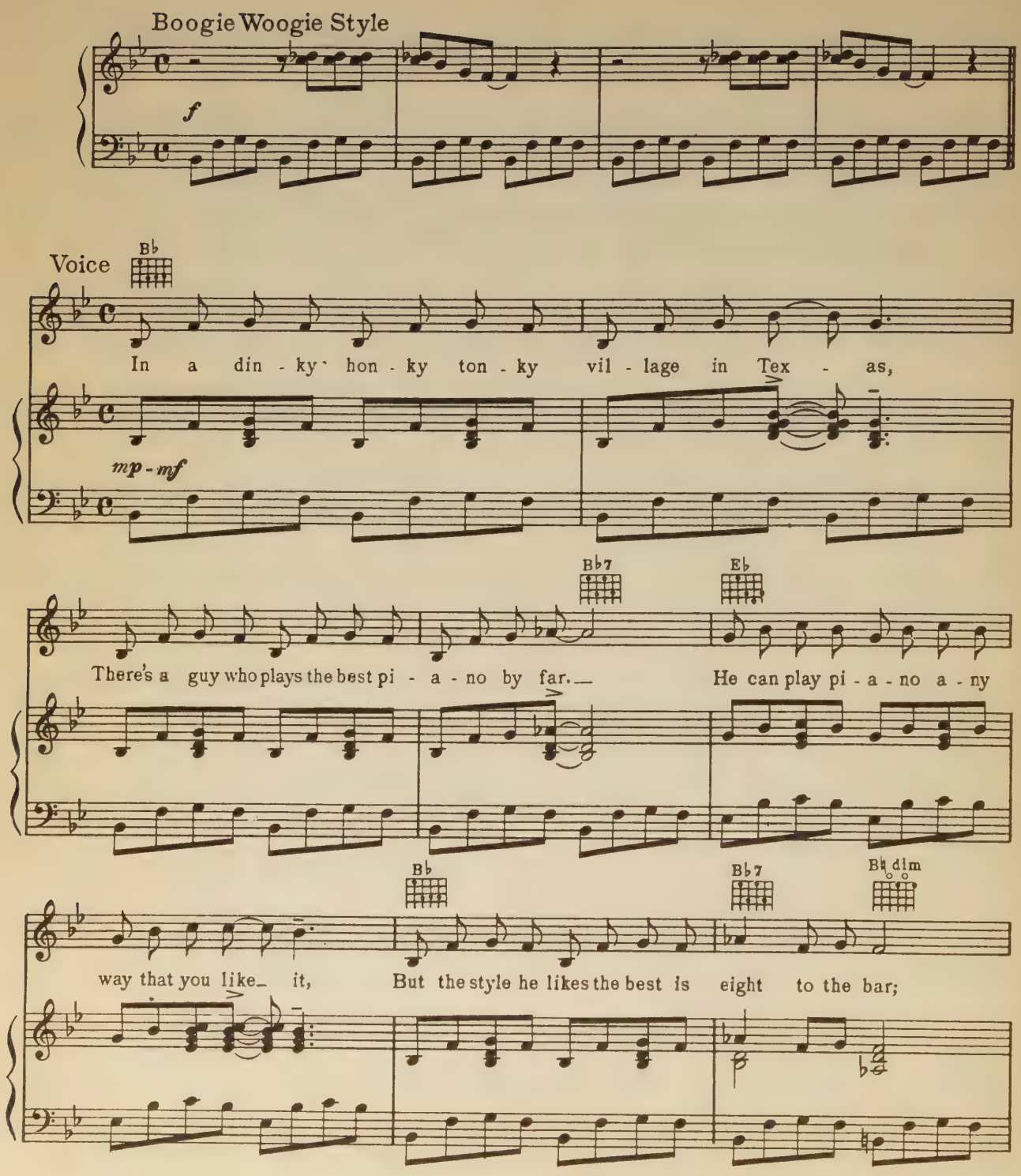

REFRAIN Slow strict tempo
Ba-sin Street is the street where the e - lite, al-ways meet in
p-f
New Or - leans, Lan' of dreams, You'll nev - er know how nice it seems, Or
fz
just how much it real - ly means; Glad to be, Yes, sir - ee, Where
wel-come's free, Dear to me, where I can lose My BA-SIN STREET BLUES
fz
1
2
3
3

BEAT ME DADDY, EIGHT TO THE BAR

By
DON RAYE
HUGHIE PRINCE
ELEANORE SHEEHY


Boogie Woogie Style
f
Voice
B♭
In a din - ky hon - ky ton - ky vil - lage in Tex - as,
mp - mf
B♭7
E♭
There's a guy who plays the best pi - a - no by far. He can play pi - a - no a - ny
B♭
B♭7
B♭dim
way that you like it, But the style he likes the best is eight to the bar;

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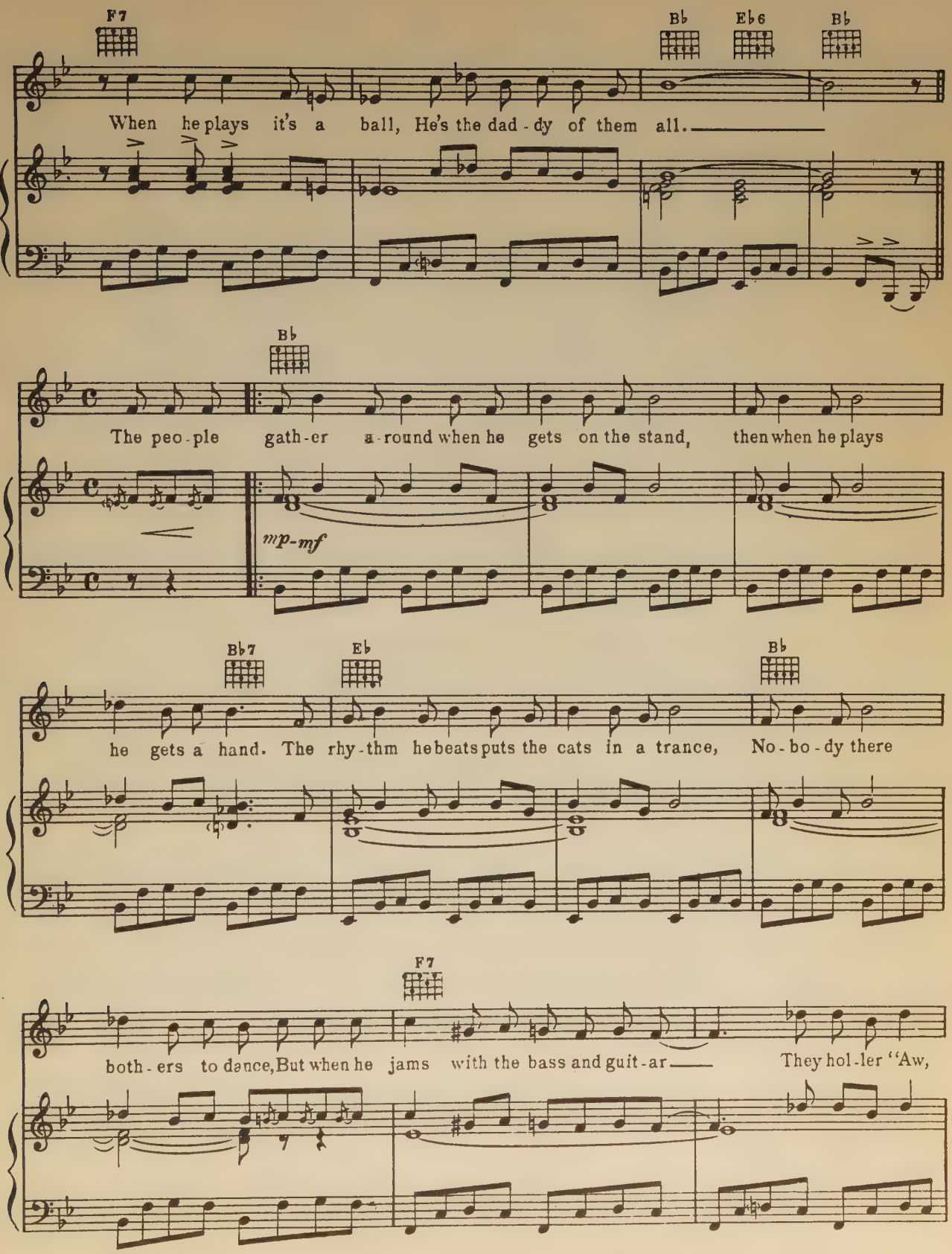
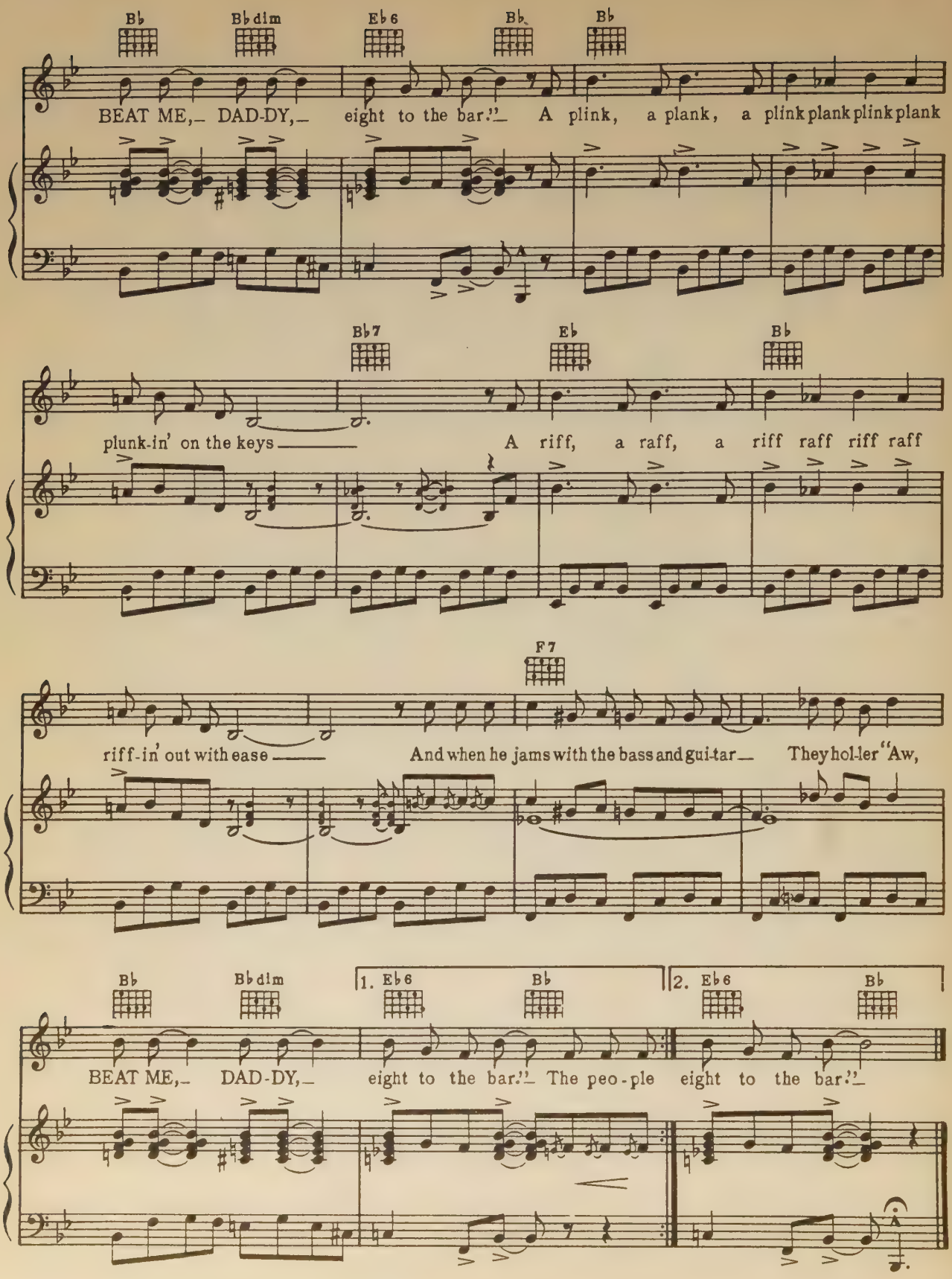
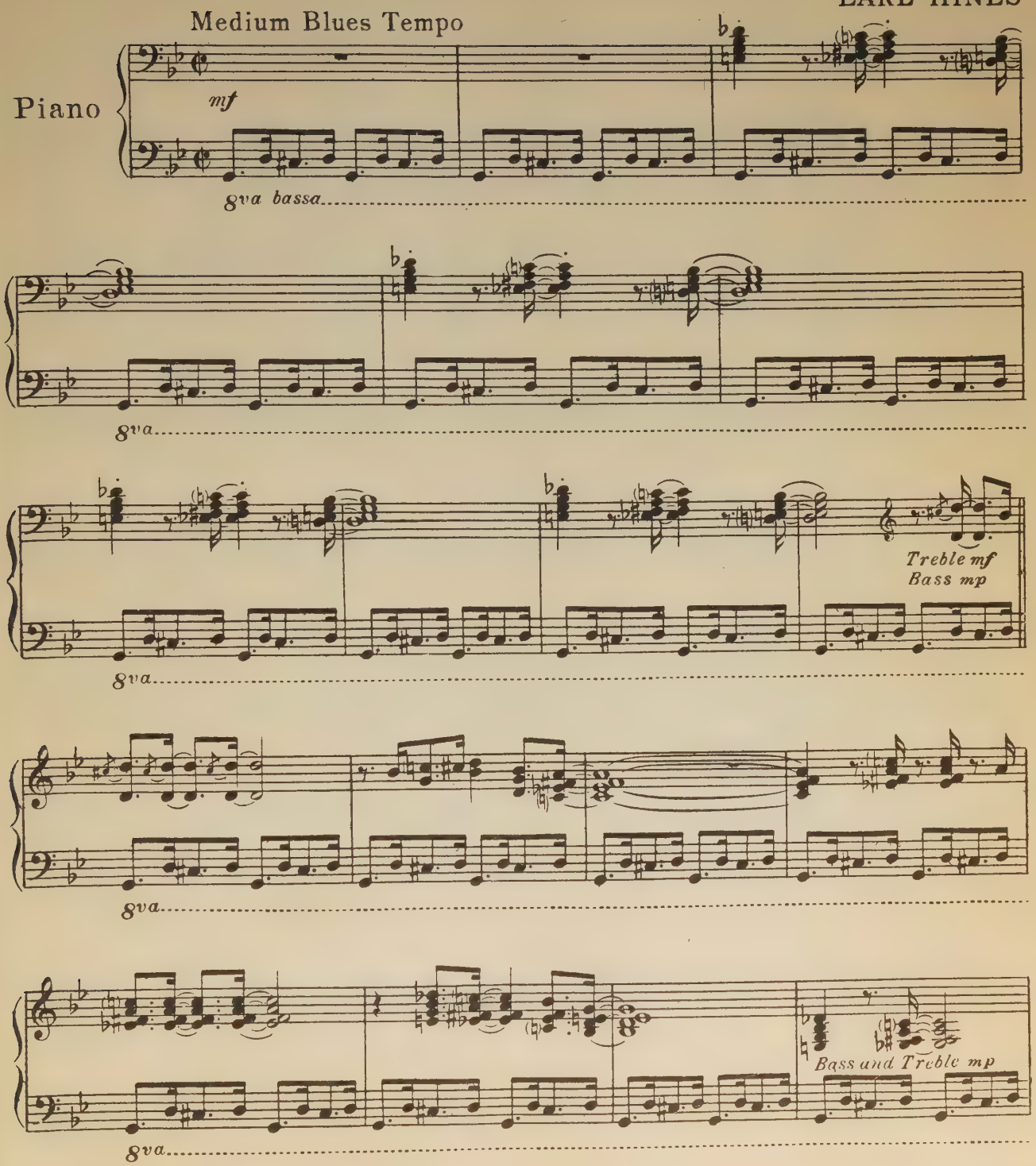

F7
B♭
E♭6
B♭
When he plays it's a ball, He's the dad - dy of them all.
B♭
The peo - ple gath - er a - round when he gets on the stand, then when he plays
mp-mf
B♭7
E♭
B♭
he gets a hand. The rhy - thm he beats puts the cats in a trance, No - bo - dy there
F7
both - ers to dance, But when he jams with the bass and guit - ar They hol - ler "Aw,


B♭
B♭dim
E♭6
B♭
B♭
BEAT ME,_ DAD-DY,_ eight to the bar."_ A plink, a plank, a plink plank plink plank
B♭7
E♭
B♭
plunk-in' on the keys_____ A riff, a raff, a riff raff riff raff
F7
riff-in' out with ease_____ And when he jams with the bass and gui-tar_ They hol-ler "Aw,
B♭
B♭dim
1. E♭6
B♭
2. E♭6
B♭
BEAT ME,_ DAD-DY,_ eight to the bar."_ The peo-ple eight to the bar."_

BOOGIE-WOOGIE ON ST. LOUIS BLUES

Piano Solo
By
EARL HINES



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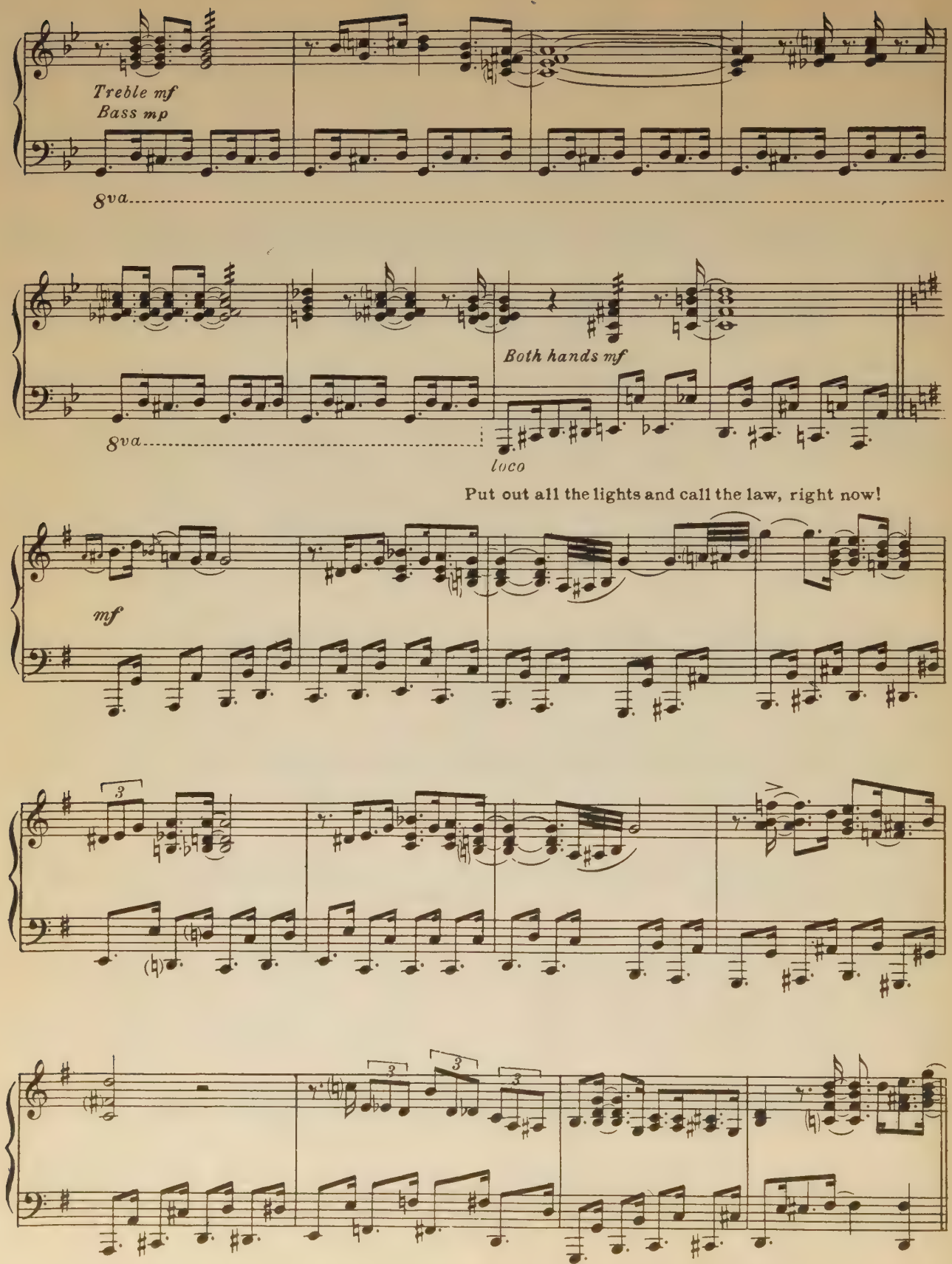
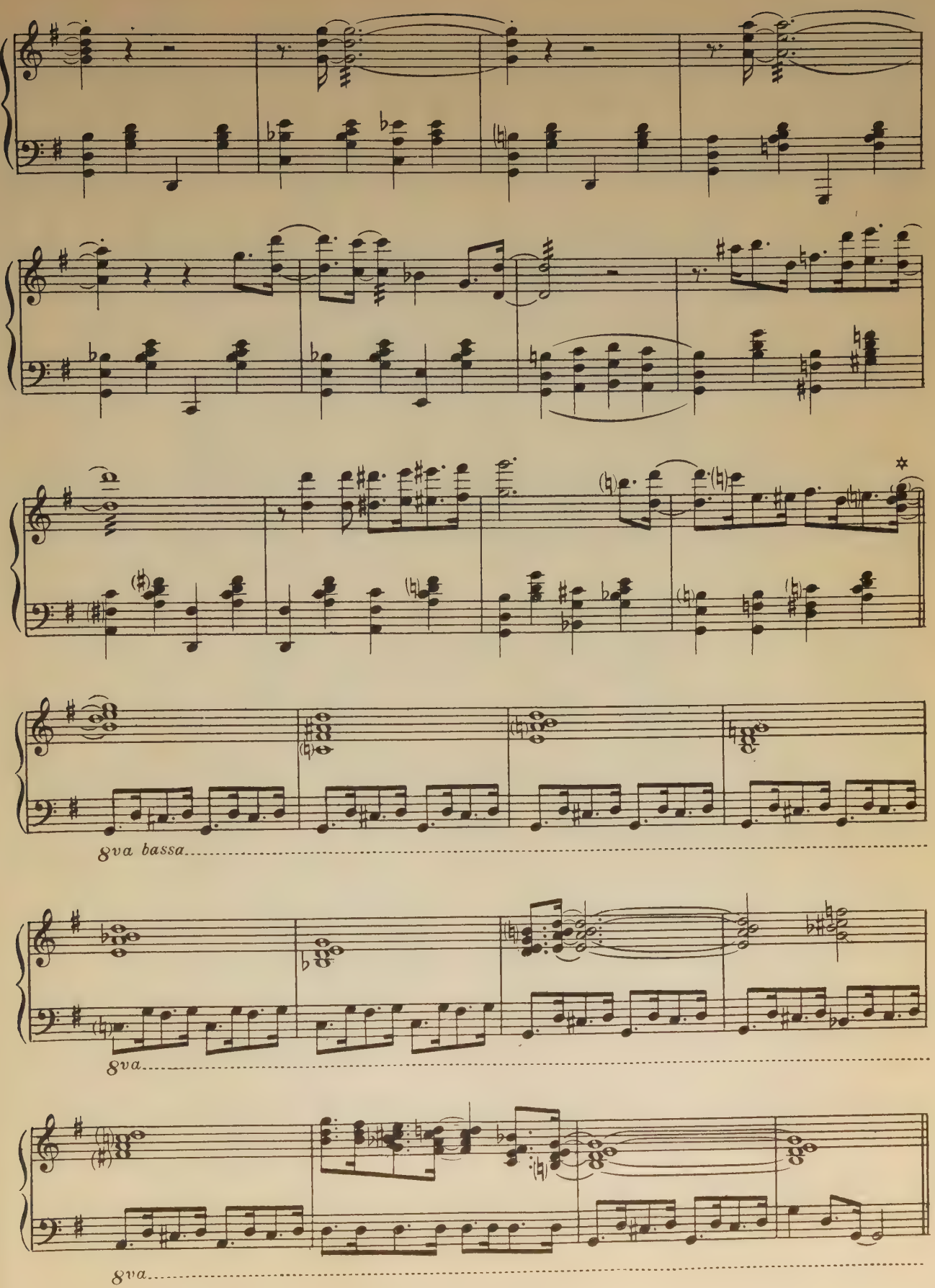
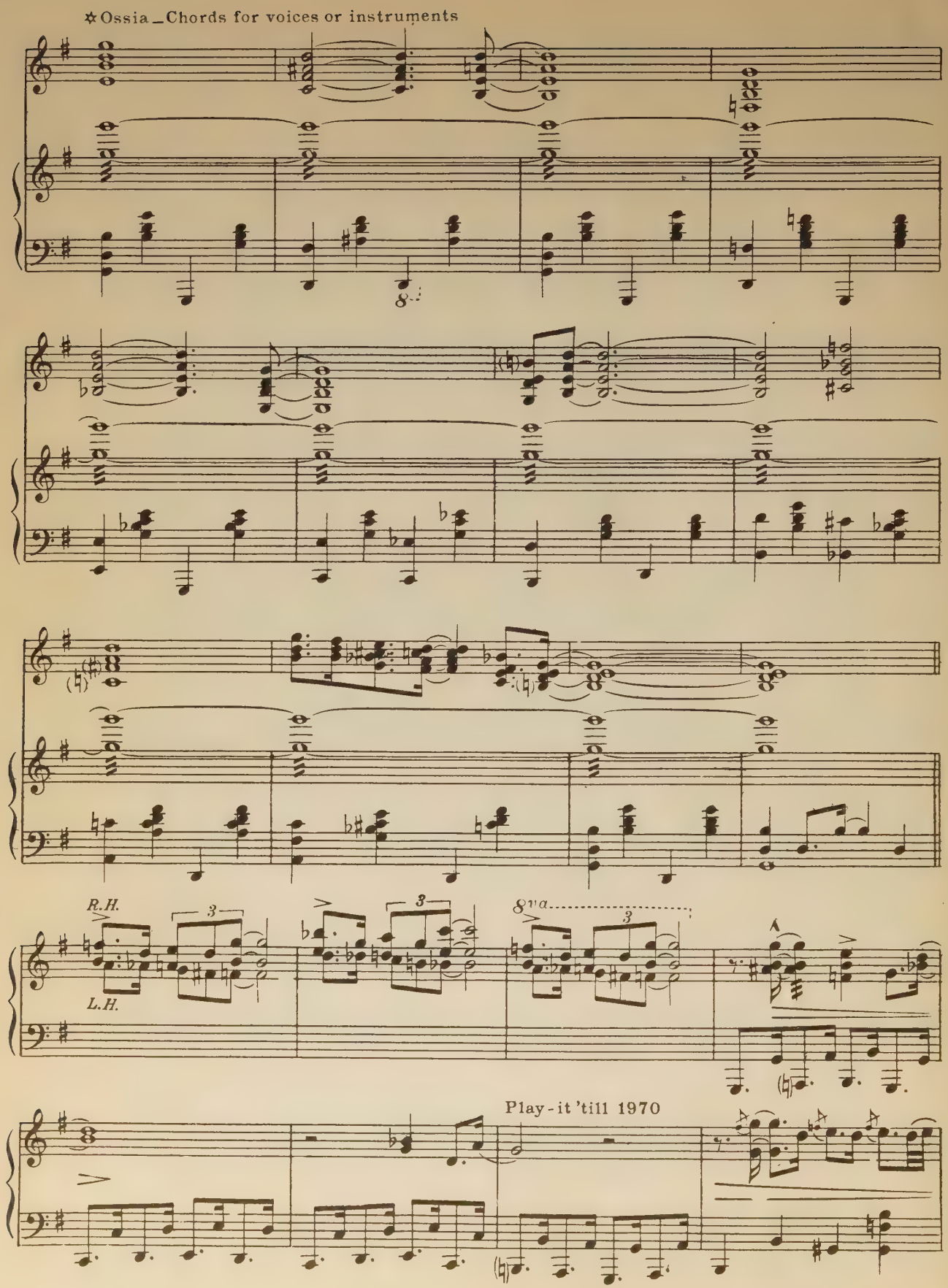
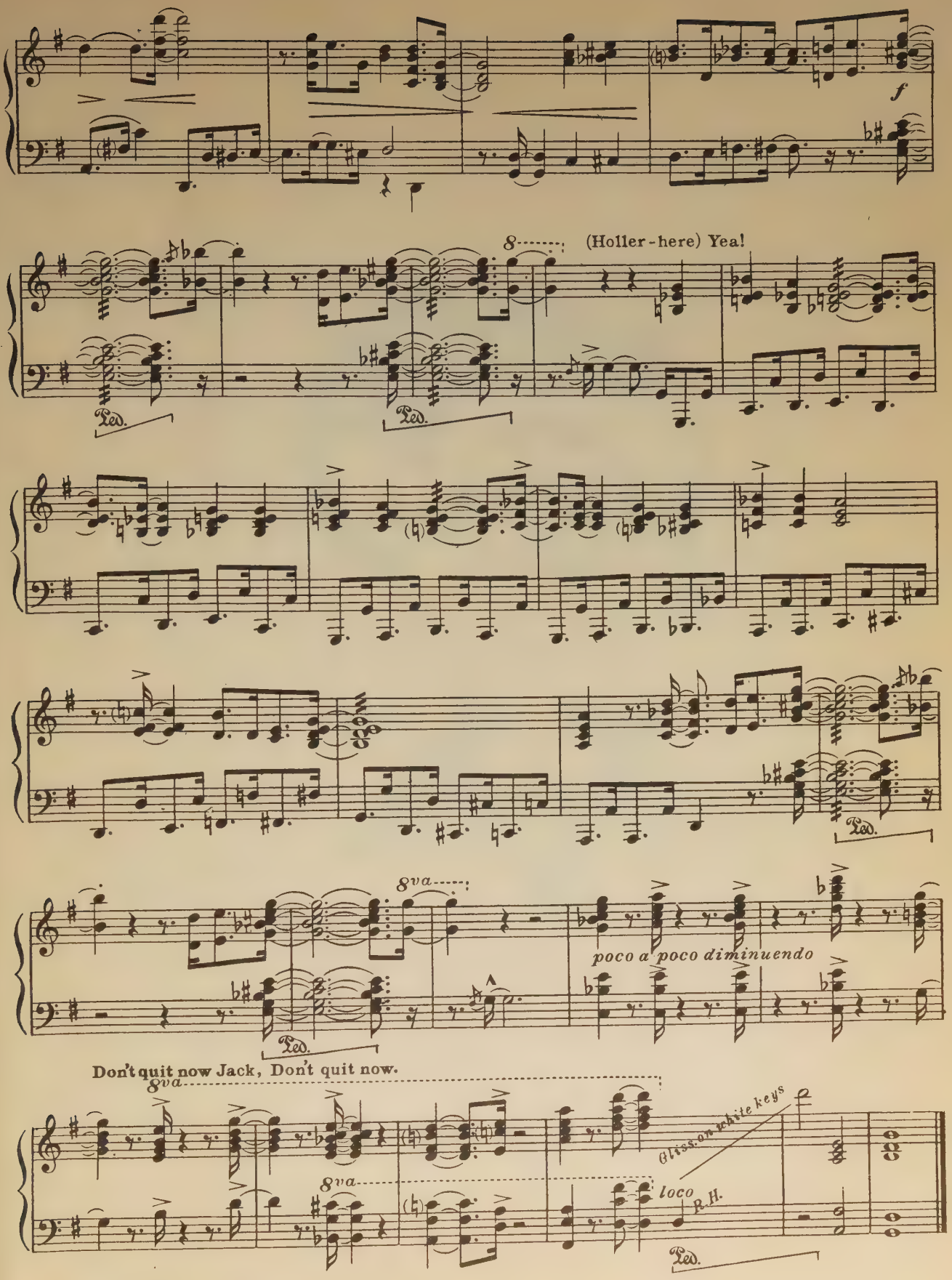

Treble mf
Bass mp
8va
Both hands mf
8va
loco
Put out all the lights and call the law, right now!
mf
3
3
3
3


8va bassa
8va
8va


✲Ossia_Chords for voices or instruments
8va
R.H.
3
L.H.
8va
Play-it 'till 1970

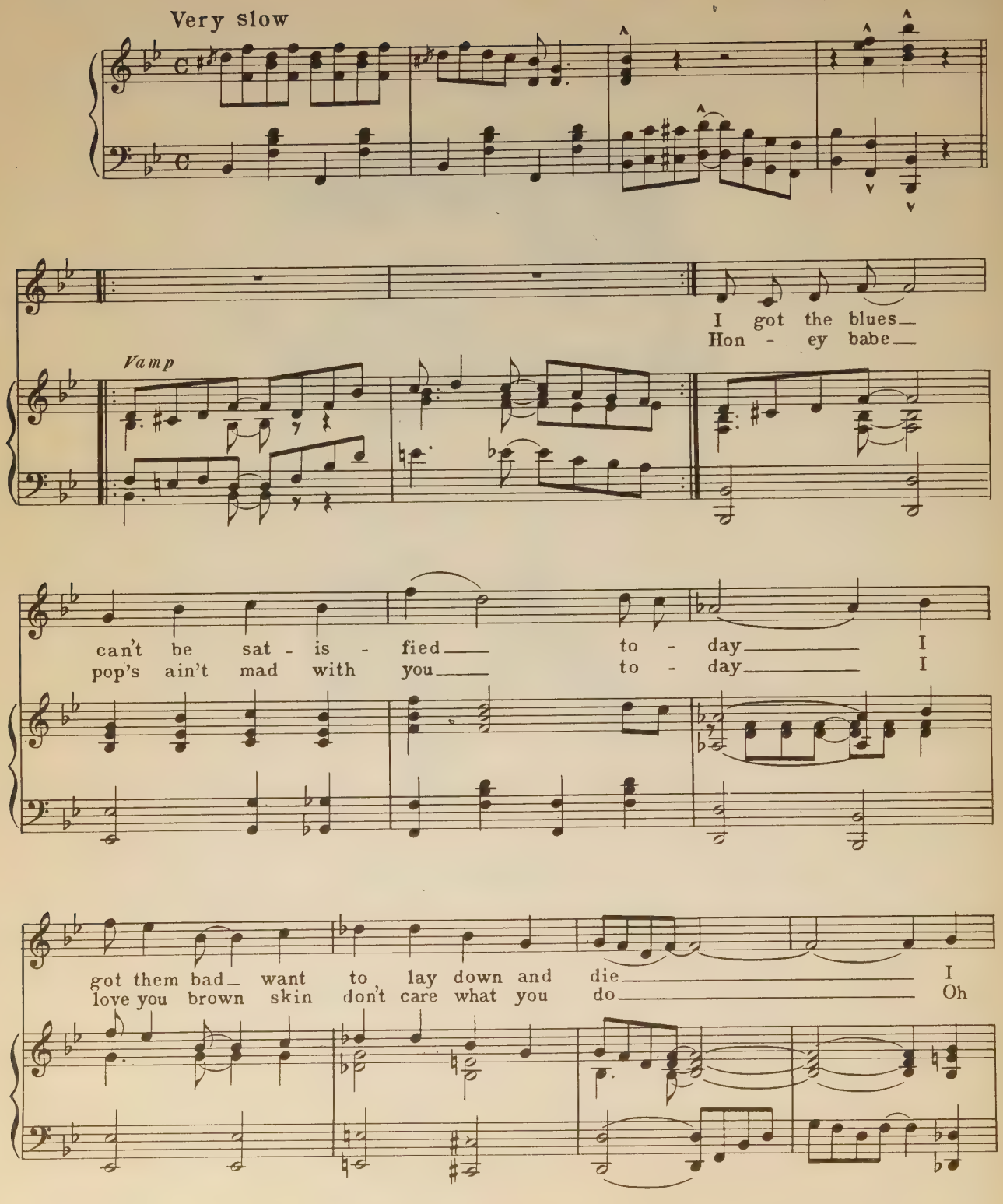

f
8
(Holler-here) Yea!
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
8va
poco a poco diminuendo
Ped.
Don't quit now Jack, Don't quit now.
8va
8va
Gliss. on white keys
loco
R.H.
Ped.

IRVING BERLIN

BLUES SONGS

BABY SEALS BLUES

Words and Music by
BABY F. SEALS
Arr. by Artie Matthews



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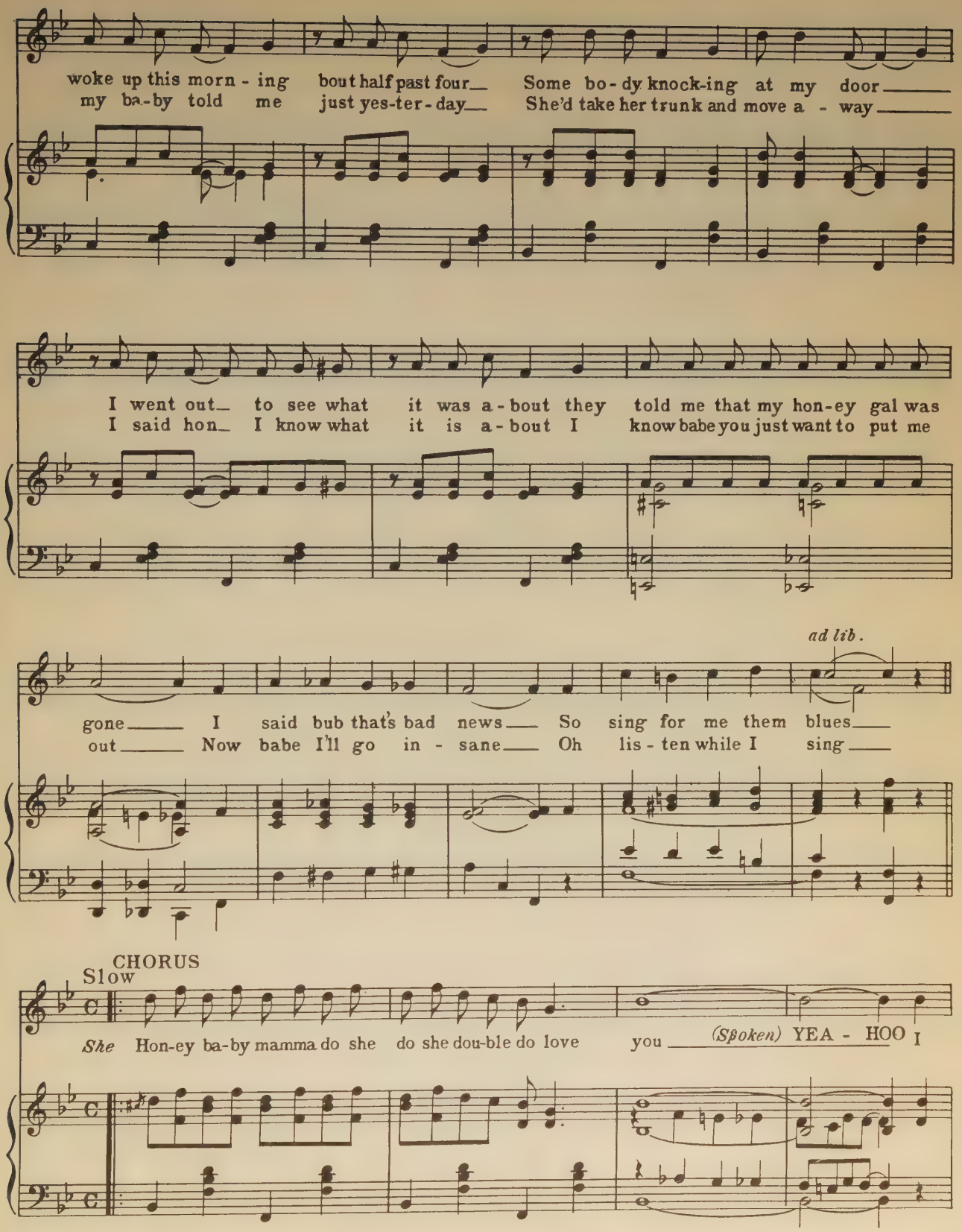
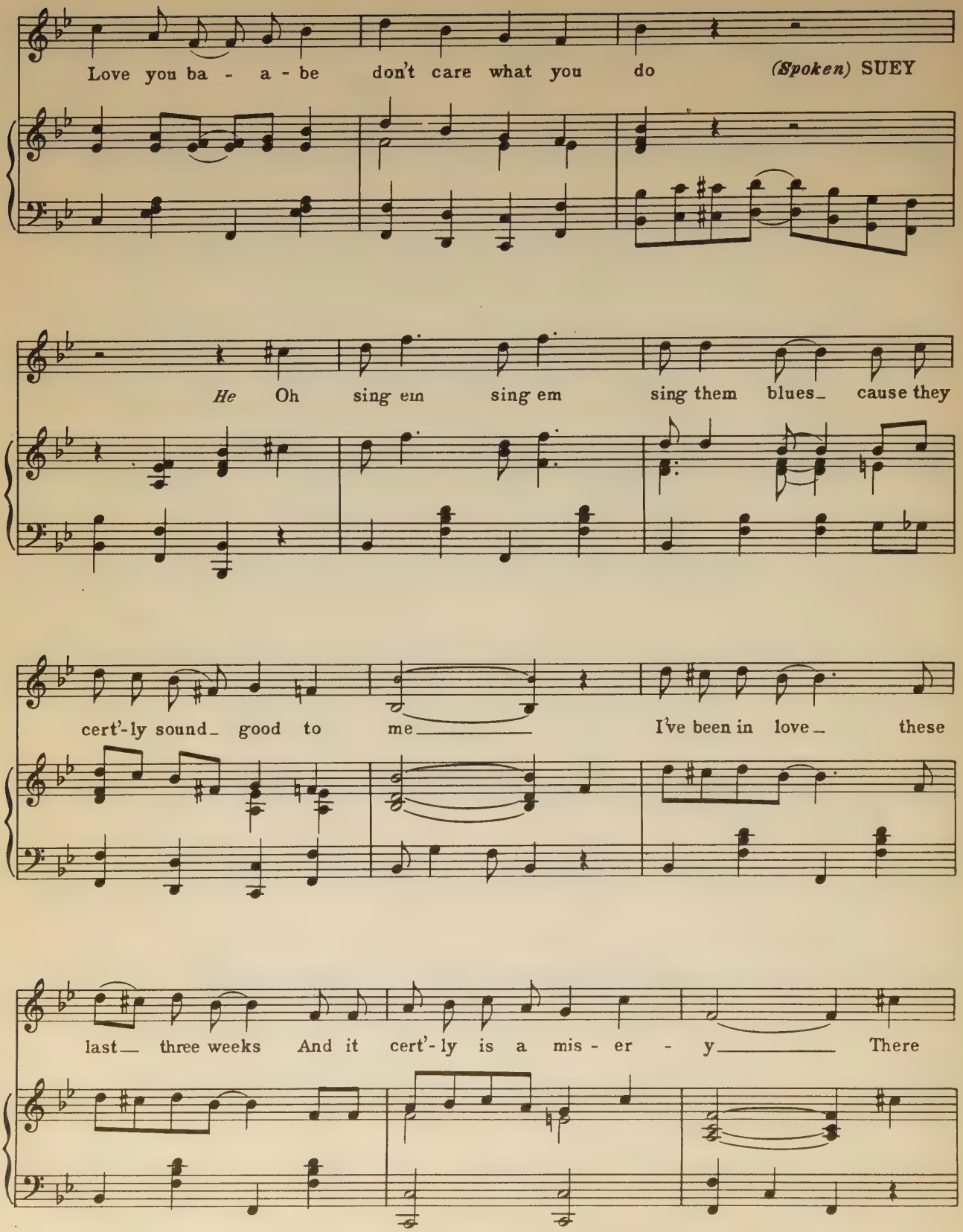
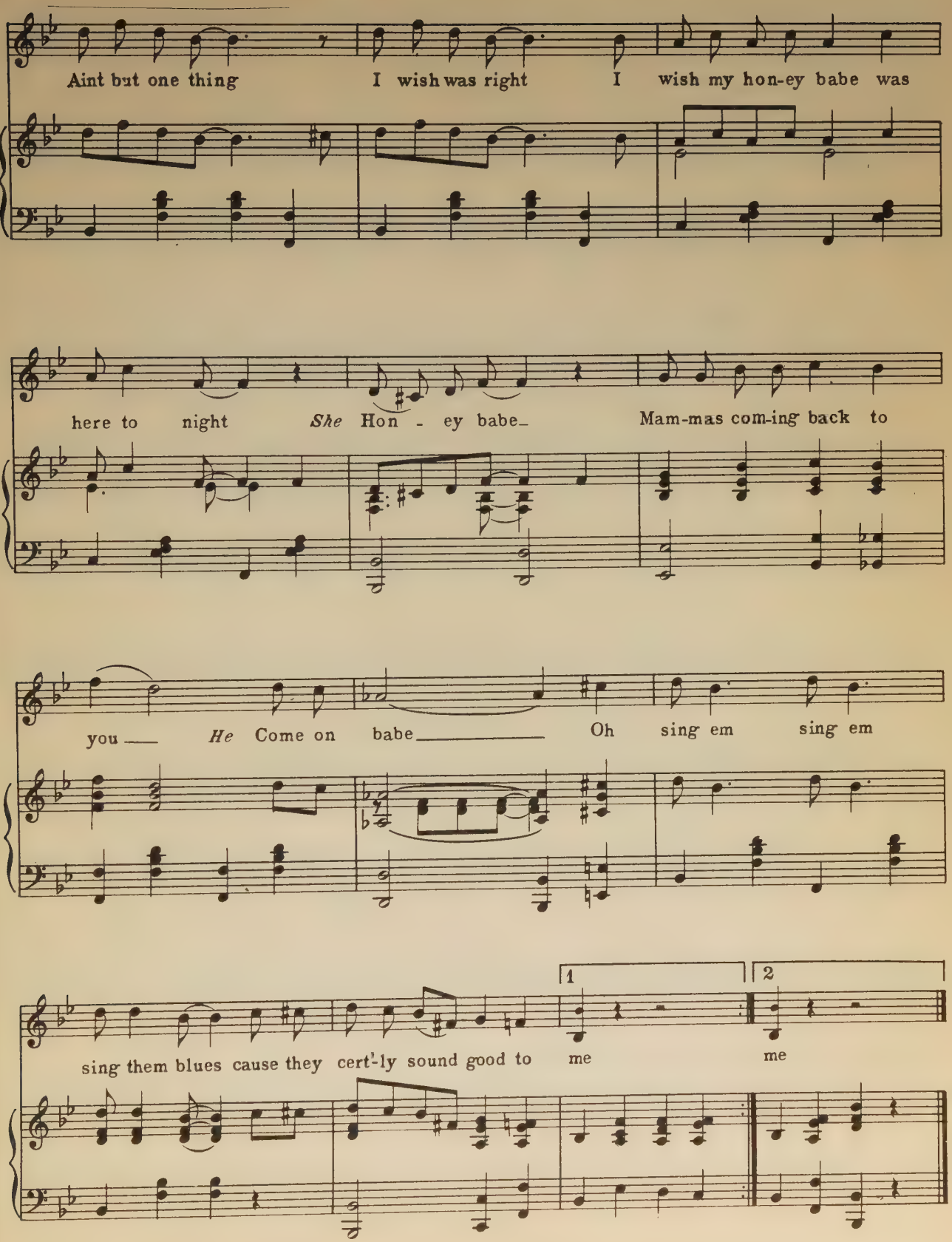

woke up this morn - ing bout half past four Some bo - dy knock-ing at my door
my ba-by told me just yes-ter - day She'd take her trunk and move a - way
I went out to see what it was a - bout they told me that my hon-ey gal was
I said hon I know what it is a - bout I know babe you just want to put me
ad lib.
gone I said bub that's bad news So sing for me them blues
out Now babe I'll go in - sane Oh lis - ten while I sing
CHORUS
Slow
She Hon-ey ba-by mamma do she do she dou-ble do love you (Spoken) YEA - HOO I

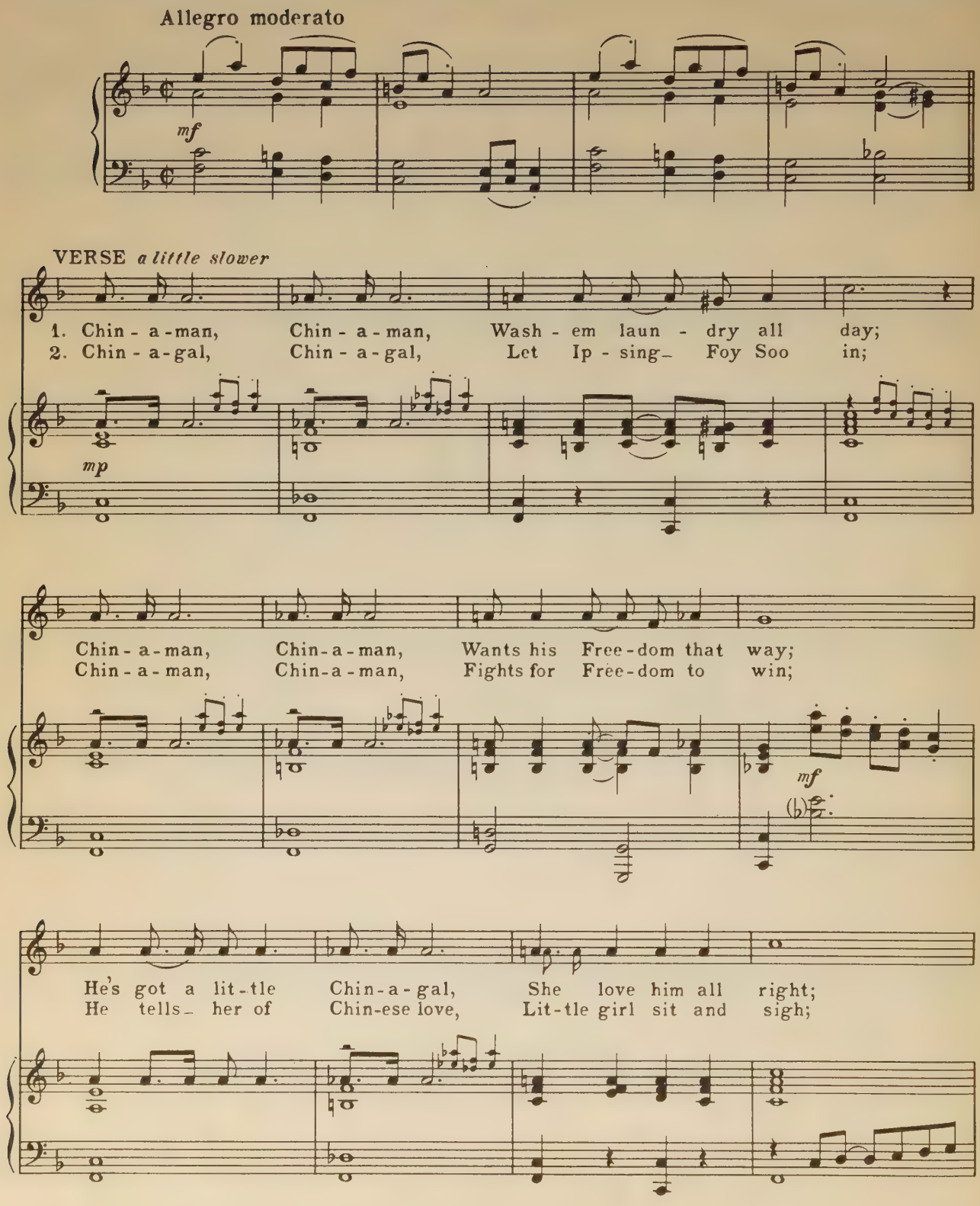

Love you ba - a - be don't care what you do (Spoken) SUEY
He Oh sing em sing em sing them blues_ cause they
cert'-ly sound_ good to me_____ I've been in love_ these
last_ three weeks And it cert'-ly is a mis - er - y_____ There


Aint but one thing I wish was right I wish my hon-ey babe was
here to night *She* Hon - ey babe_ Mam-mas com-ing back to
you___ *He* Come on babe_____ Oh sing em sing em
1
2
sing them blues cause they cert'-ly sound good to me me

CHINESE BLUES

Lyric by
FRED D. MOORE

Music by
OSCAR GARDNER


Allegro moderato
mf
VERSE a little slower
1. Chin - a - man, Chin - a - man, Wash - em laun - dry all day;
2. Chin - a - gal, Chin - a - gal, Let Ip - sing_ Foy Soo in;
mp
Chin - a - man, Chin - a - man, Wants his Free - dom that way;
Chin - a - man, Chin - a - man, Fights for Free - dom to win;
mf
He's got a lit - tle Chin - a - gal, She love him all right;
He tells_ her of Chin-ese love, Lit-tle girl sit and sigh;

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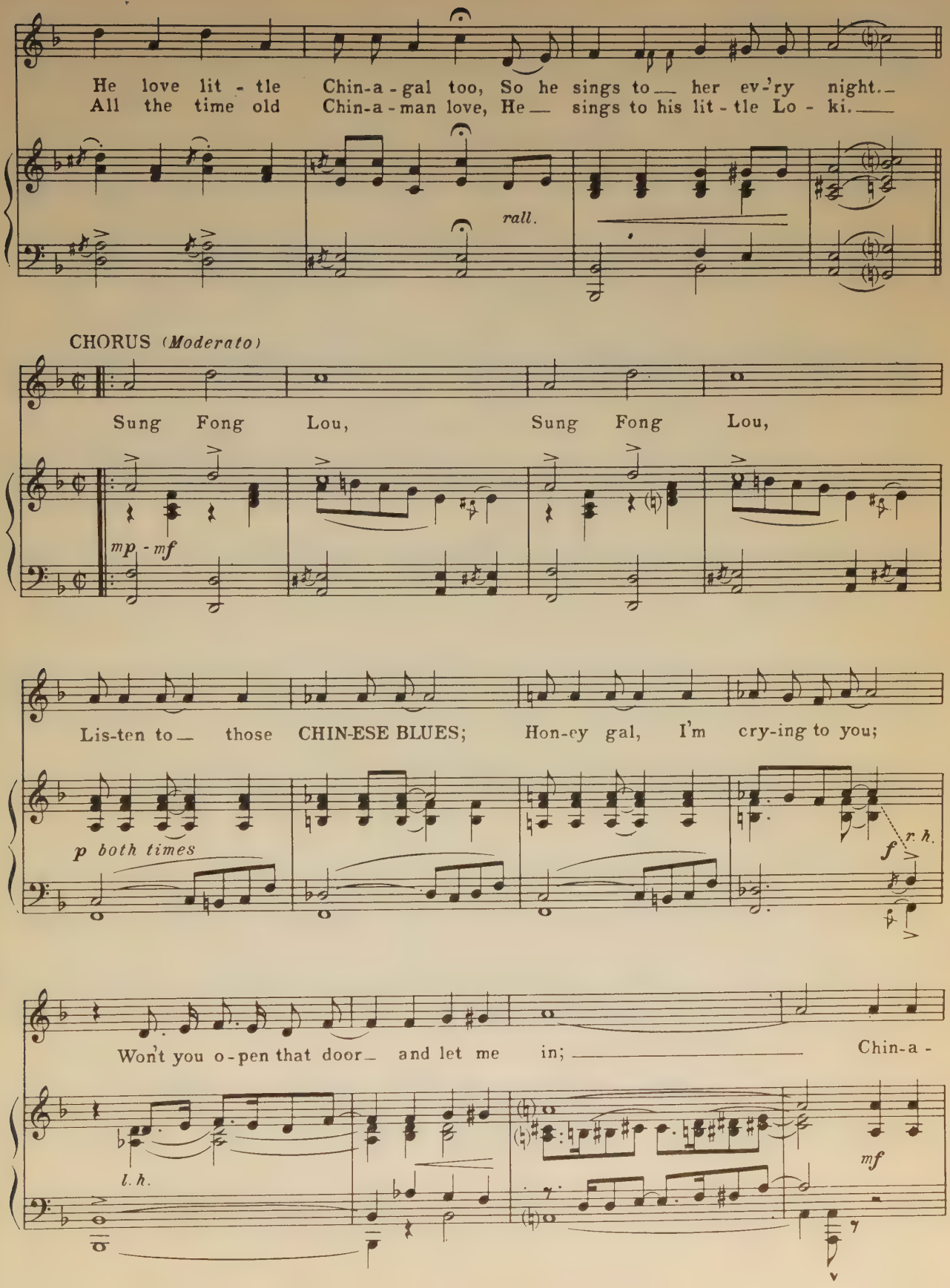
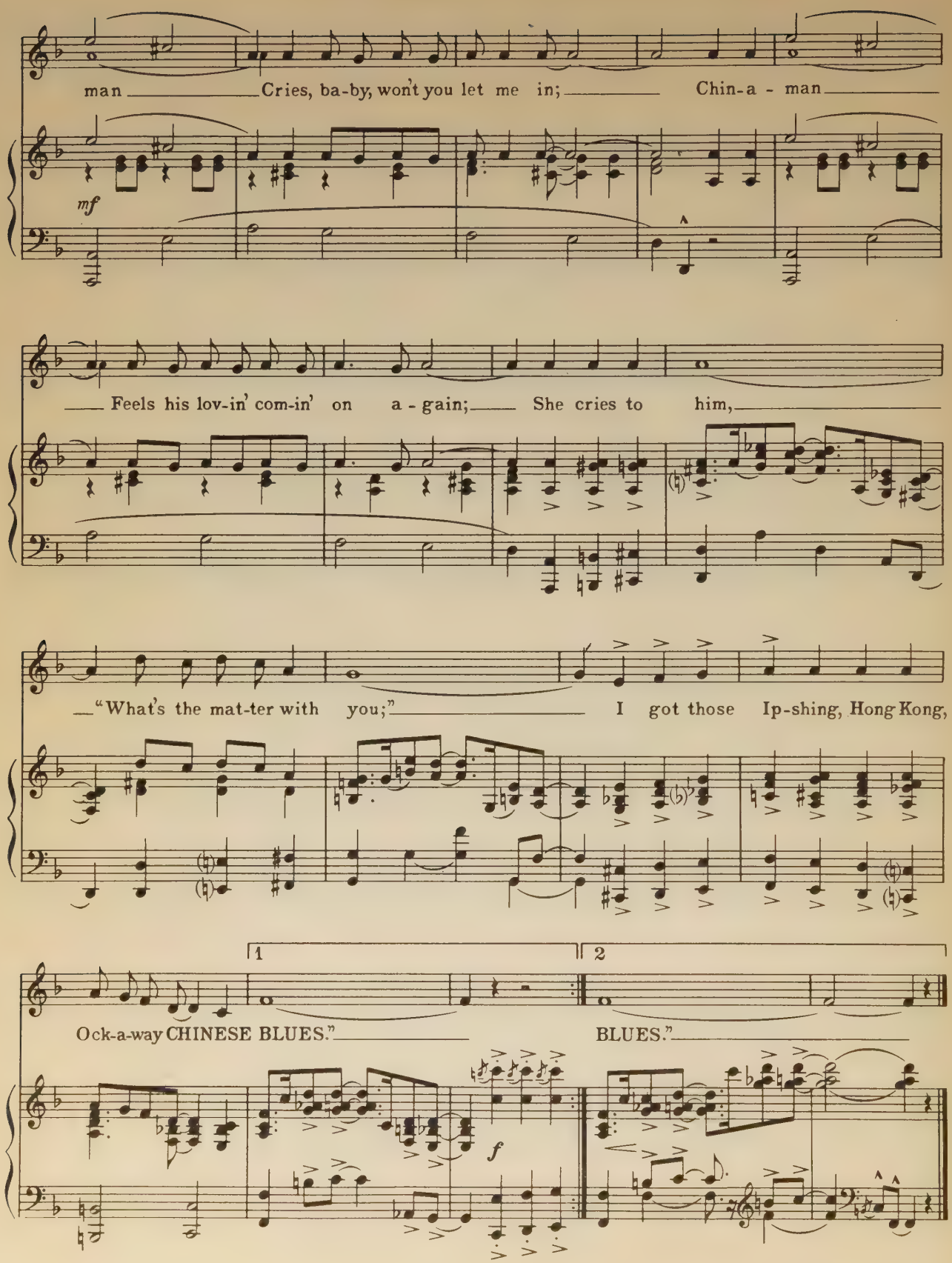
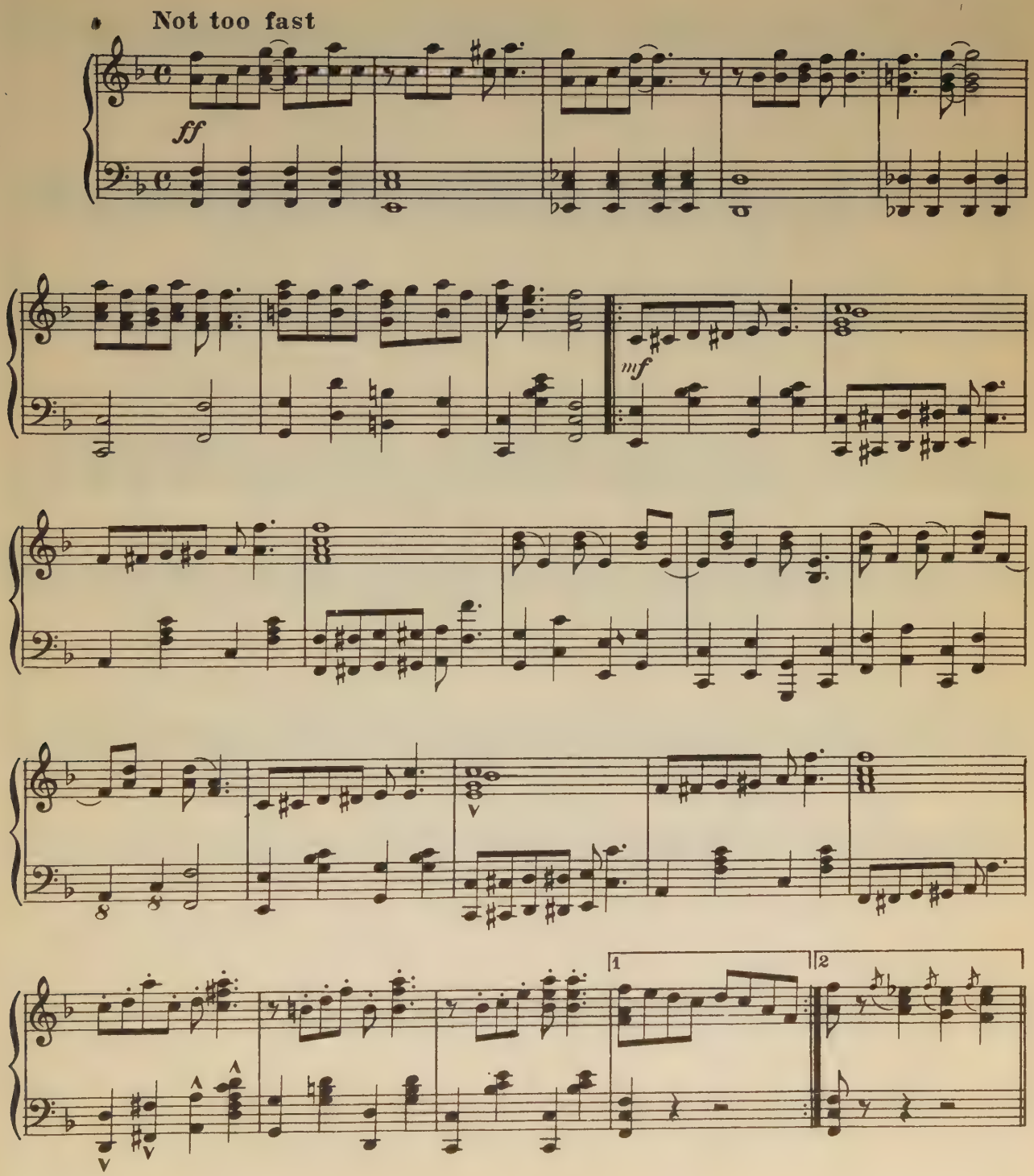

He love lit - tle Chin-a - gal too, So he sings to her ev-'ry night.
All the time old Chin-a - man love, He sings to his lit - tle Lo - ki.
rall.
CHORUS (Moderato)
Sung Fong Lou, Sung Fong Lou,
mp - mf
Lis-ten to those CHIN-ESE BLUES; Hon-ey gal, I'm cry-ing to you;
p both times
r. h.
f
Won't you o-pen that door and let me in; Chin-a -
l. h.
mf


man Cries, ba-by, won't you let me in; Chin-a - man
mf
Feels his lov-in' com-in' on a - gain; She cries to him,
"What's the mat-ter with you;" I got those Ip-shing, Hong-Kong,
1
2
Ock-a-way CHINESE BLUES." BLUES."
f

OLE MISS

W. C. HANDY



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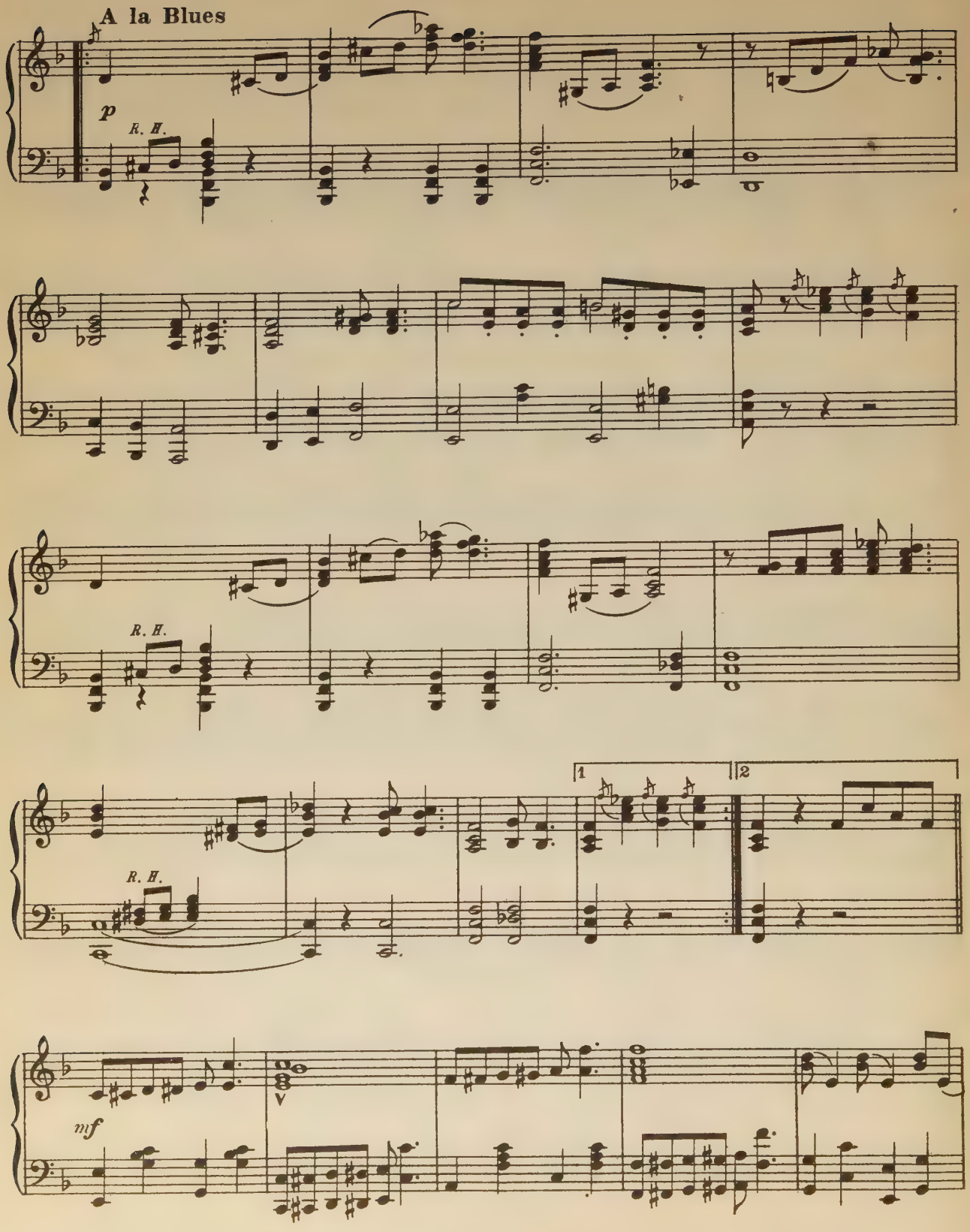
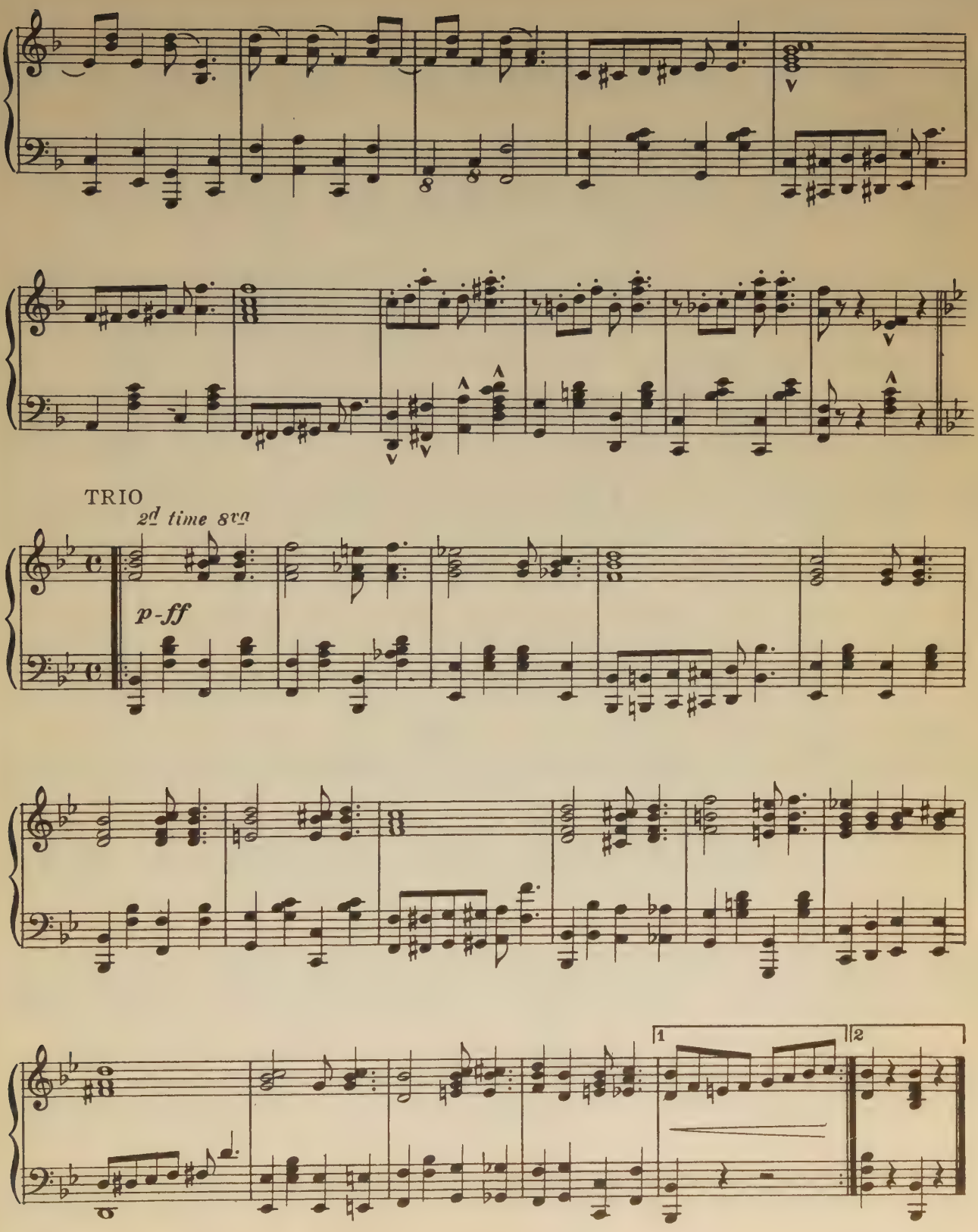
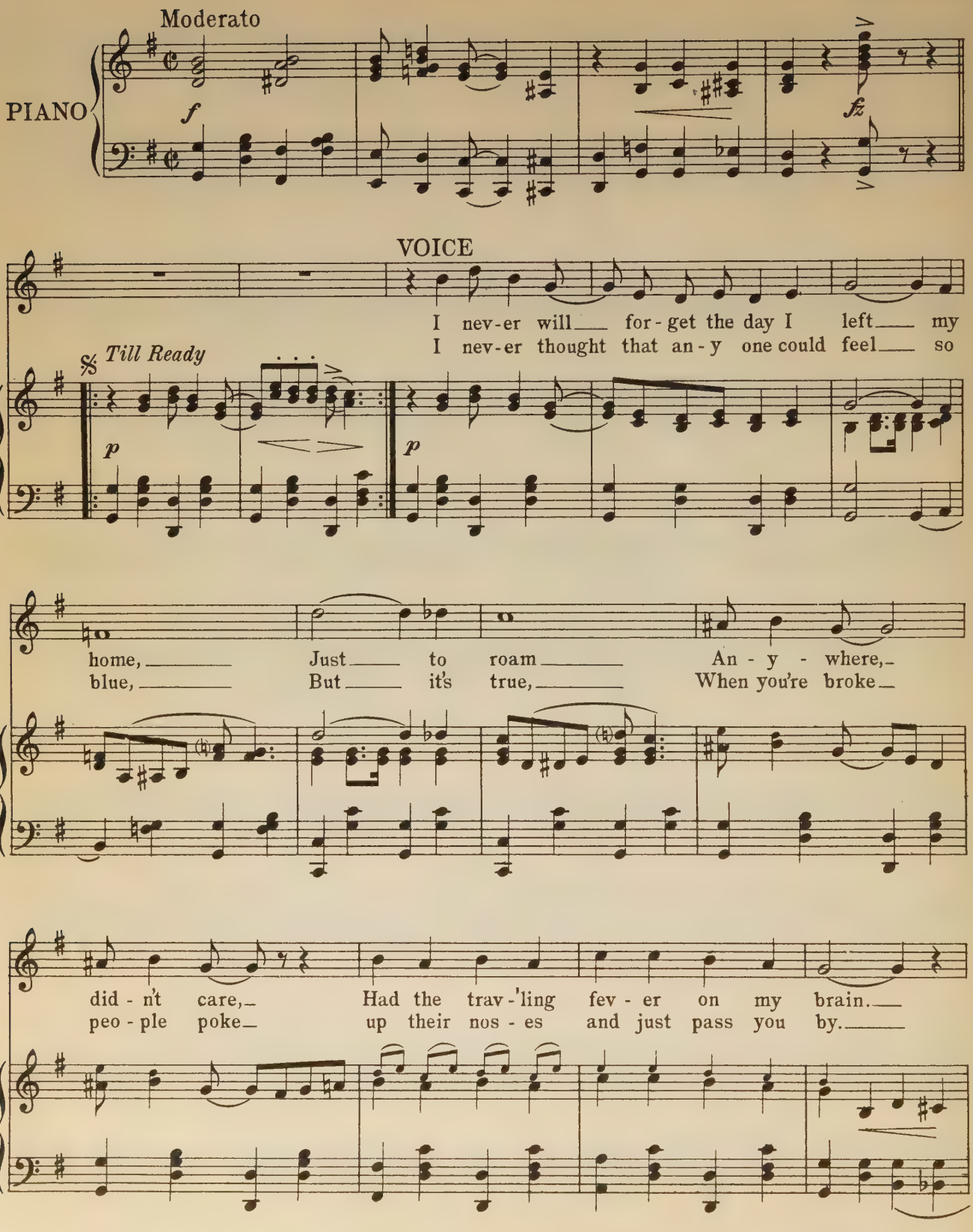

A la Blues
p
R. H.
R. H.
R. H.
1
2
mf


TRIO
2d time 8va
p-ff
1
2

HOMESICKNESS BLUES
(EXCERPT)

CLIFF HESS


Moderato
PIANO
f
fz
VOICE
I nev-er will for-get the day I left my
I nev-er thought that an-y one could feel so
Till Ready
p
p
home, Just to roam An-y-where,
blue, But it's true, When you're broke
did-n't care, Had the trav-'ling fev-er on my brain.
peo-ple poke up their nos-es and just pass you by.

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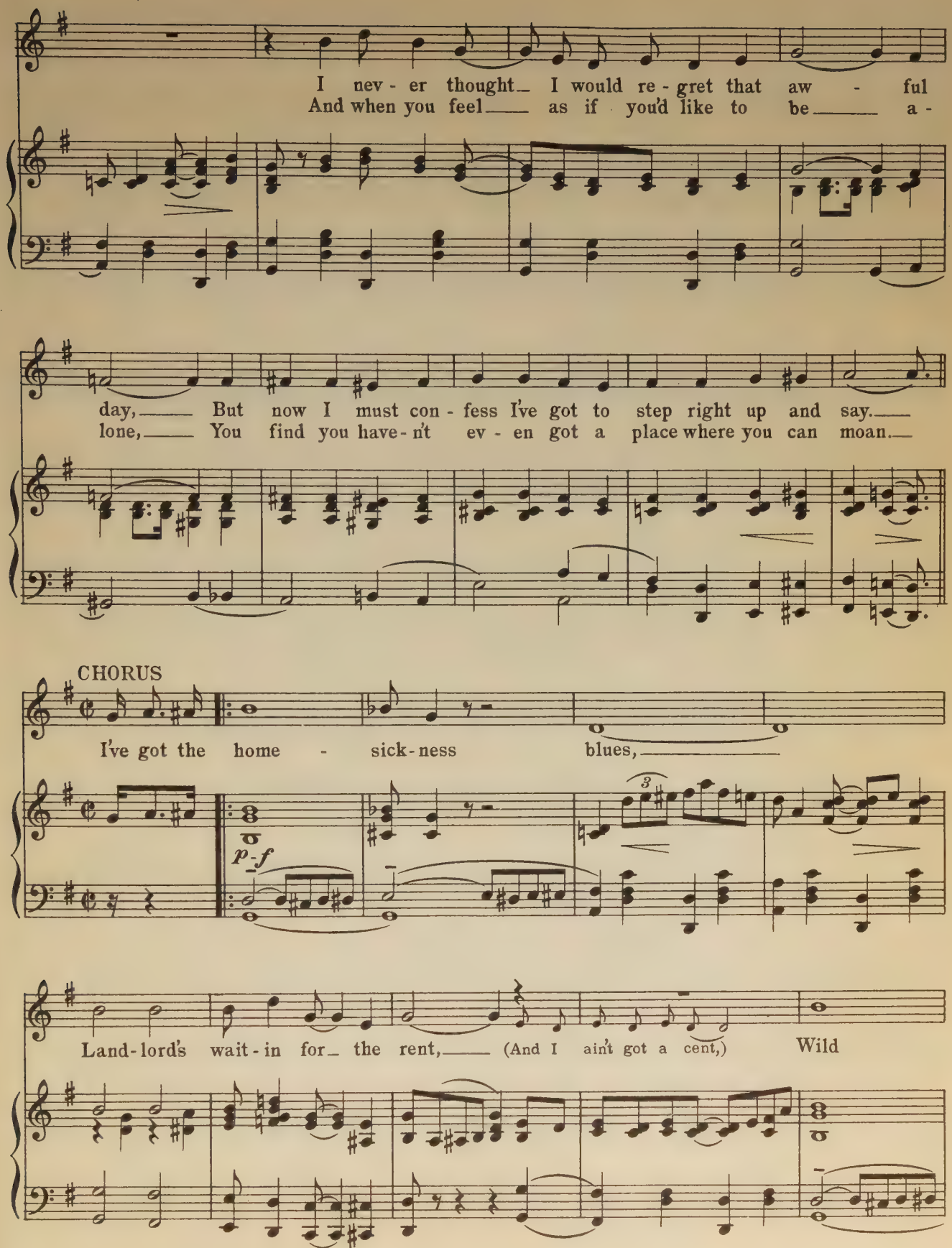
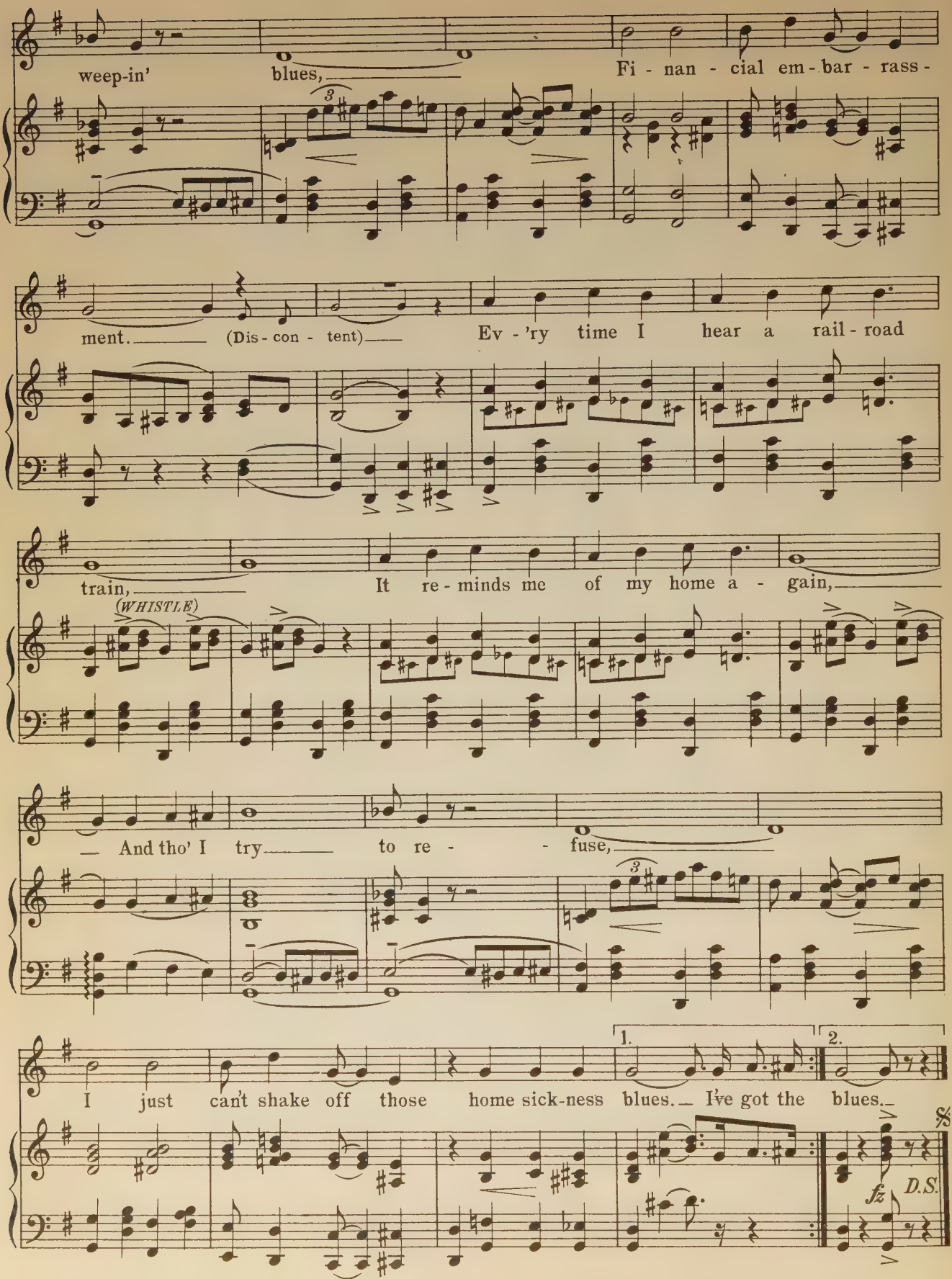
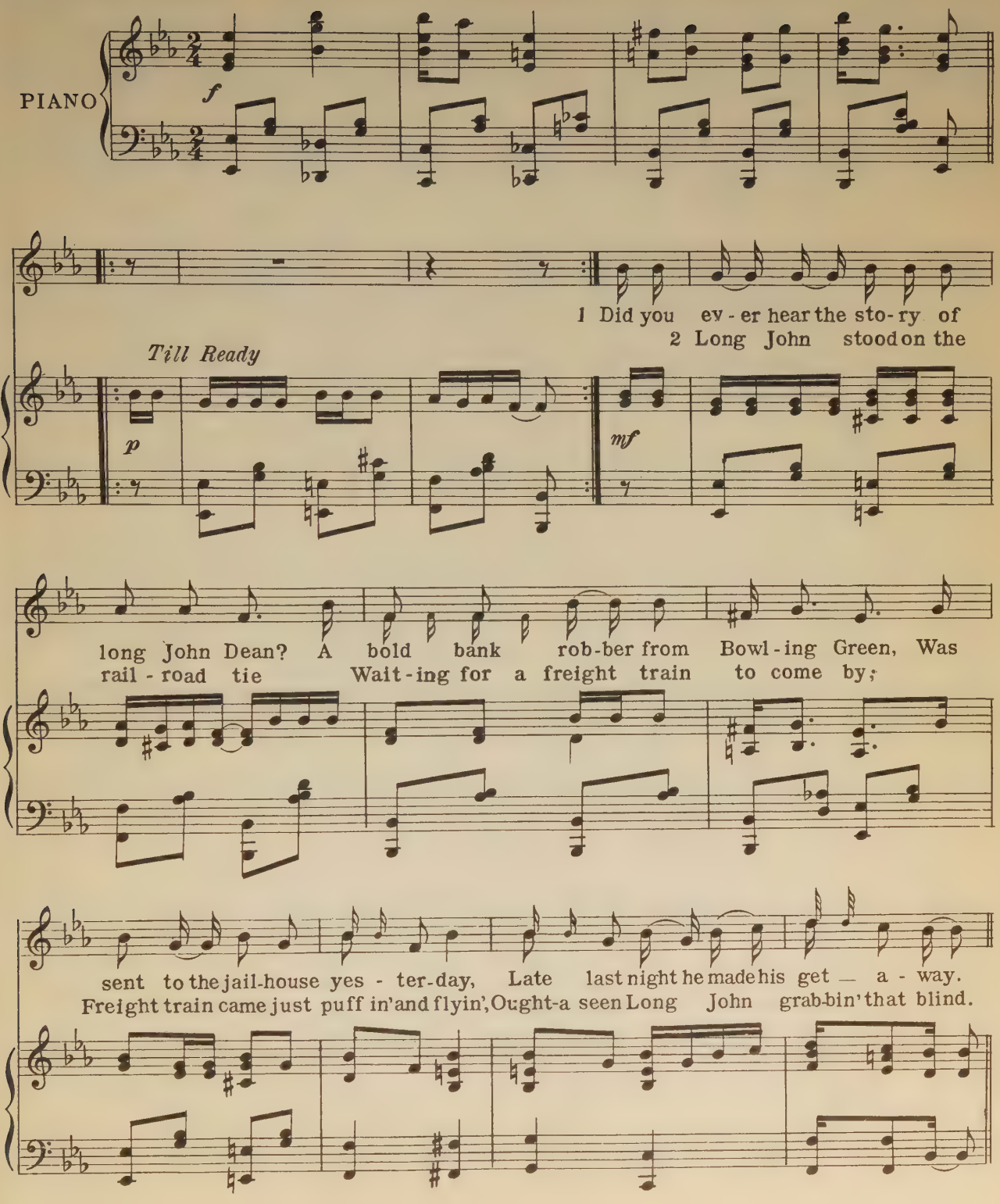

I nev - er thought I would re - gret that aw - ful
And when you feel as if you'd like to be a -
day, But now I must con - fess I've got to step right up and say.
lone, You find you have - n't ev - en got a place where you can moan.
CHORUS
I've got the home - sick - ness blues,
p - f
Land - lord's wait - in for the rent, (And I ain't got a cent,) Wild


weep-in' blues,
Fi - nan - cial em - bar - rass -
ment. (Dis - con - tent)
Ev - 'ry time I hear a rail - road
train,
It re - minds me of my home a - gain,
(WHISTLE)
And tho' I try to re - fuse,
I just can't shake off those home sick-ness blues. I've got the blues.
1.
2.
fz
D.S.

LONG GONE

Words by
CHRIS SMITH

Music by
W. C. HANDY


PIANO
f
1 Did you ev - er hear the sto - ry of
2 Long John stood on the
Till Ready
p
mf
long John Dean? A bold bank rob-ber from Bowl - ing Green, Was
rail - road tie Wait - ing for a freight train to come by;
sent to the jail-house yes - ter-day, Late last night he made his get — a - way.
Freight train came just puff in' and flyin', Ought-a seen Long John grab-bin' that blind.

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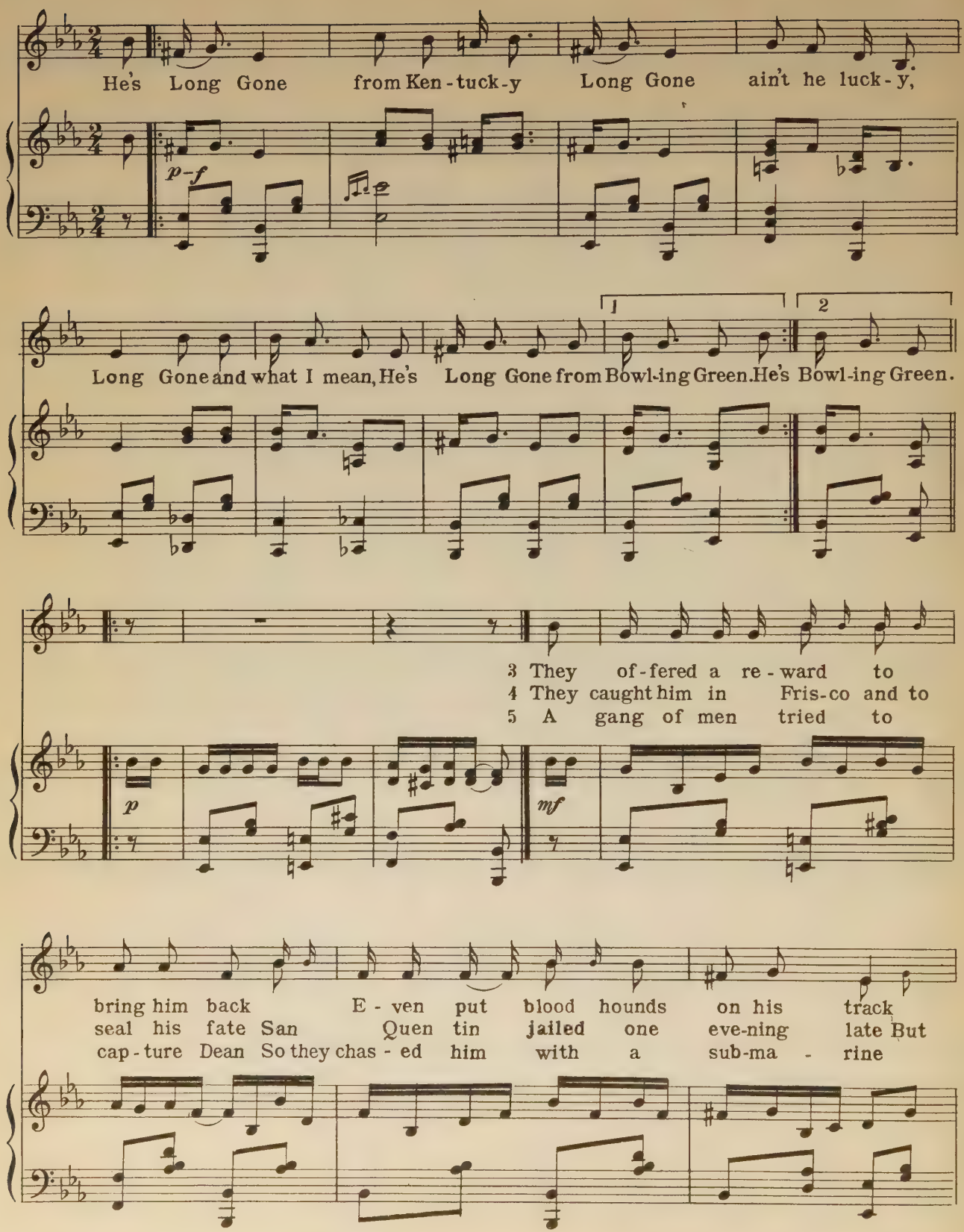
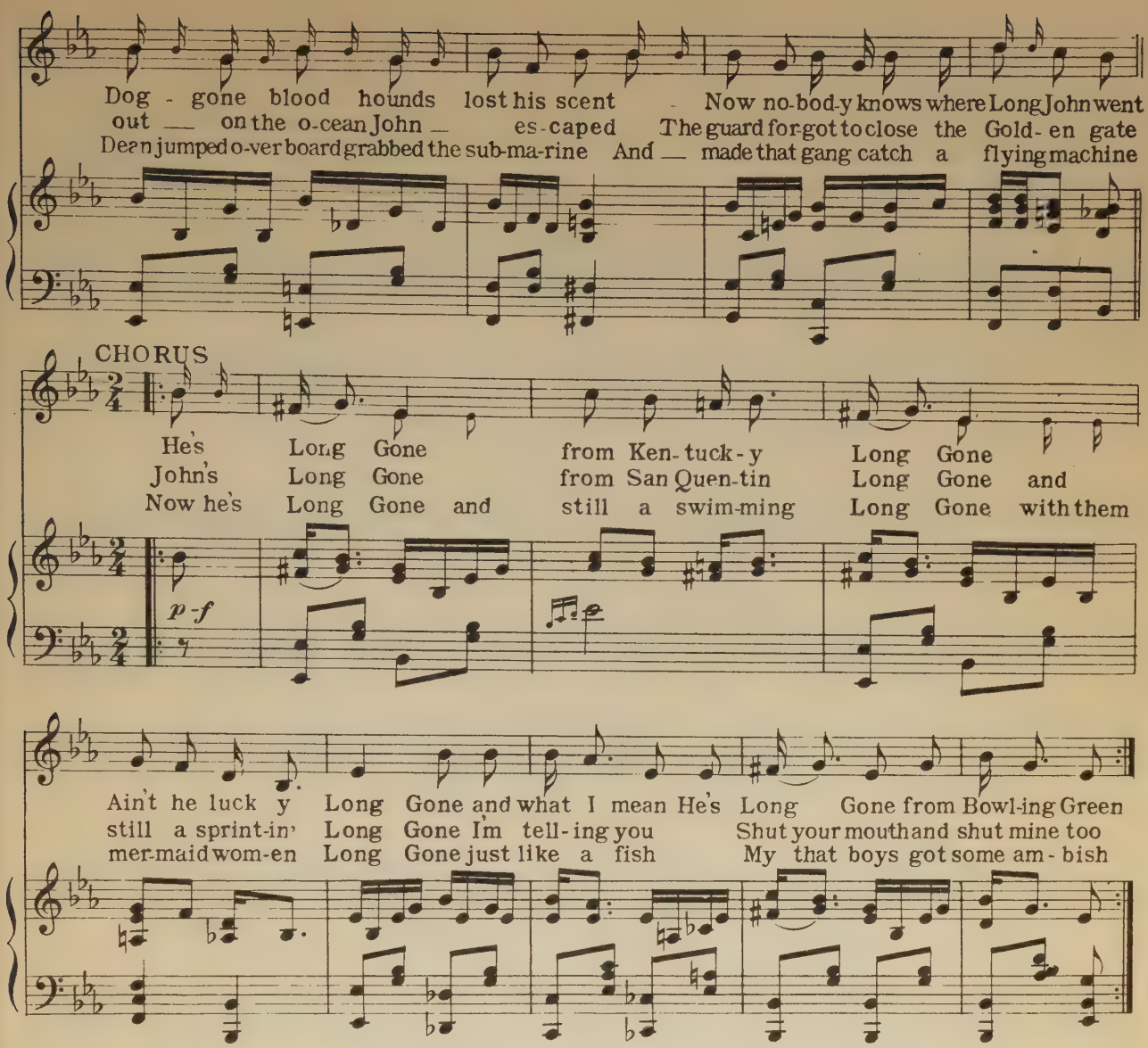

He's Long Gone from Ken-tuck-y Long Gone ain't he luck-y,
p-f
Long Gone and what I mean, He's Long Gone from Bowl-ing Green. He's Bowl-ing Green.
1
2
3 They of-fered a re-ward to
4 They caught him in Fris-co and to
5 A gang of men tried to
p
mf
bring him back E-ven put blood hounds on his track
seal his fate San Quen tin jailed one eve-ning late But
cap-ture Dean So they chas-ed him with a sub-ma-rine


Dog - gone blood hounds lost his scent Now no-bod-y knows where Long John went
out — on the o-cean John — es-caped The guard for-got to close the Gold- en gate
Dean jumped o-ver board grabbed the sub-ma-rine And — made that gang catch a flying machine
CHORUS
He's Long Gone from Ken- tuck - y Long Gone
John's Long Gone from San Quen-tin Long Gone and
Now he's Long Gone and still a swim-ming Long Gone with them
p - f
Ain't he luck y Long Gone and what I mean He's Long Gone from Bowl-ing Green
still a sprint-in' Long Gone I'm tell-ing you Shut your mouth and shut mine too
mer-maid wom-en Long Gone just like a fish My that boys got some am - bish

6. A vamp thought she had Long John's goat,
She took his watch and money from his coat
John stole all she had now she thinks hes a riddle
He didnt leave enough cloth to dust a fiddle.

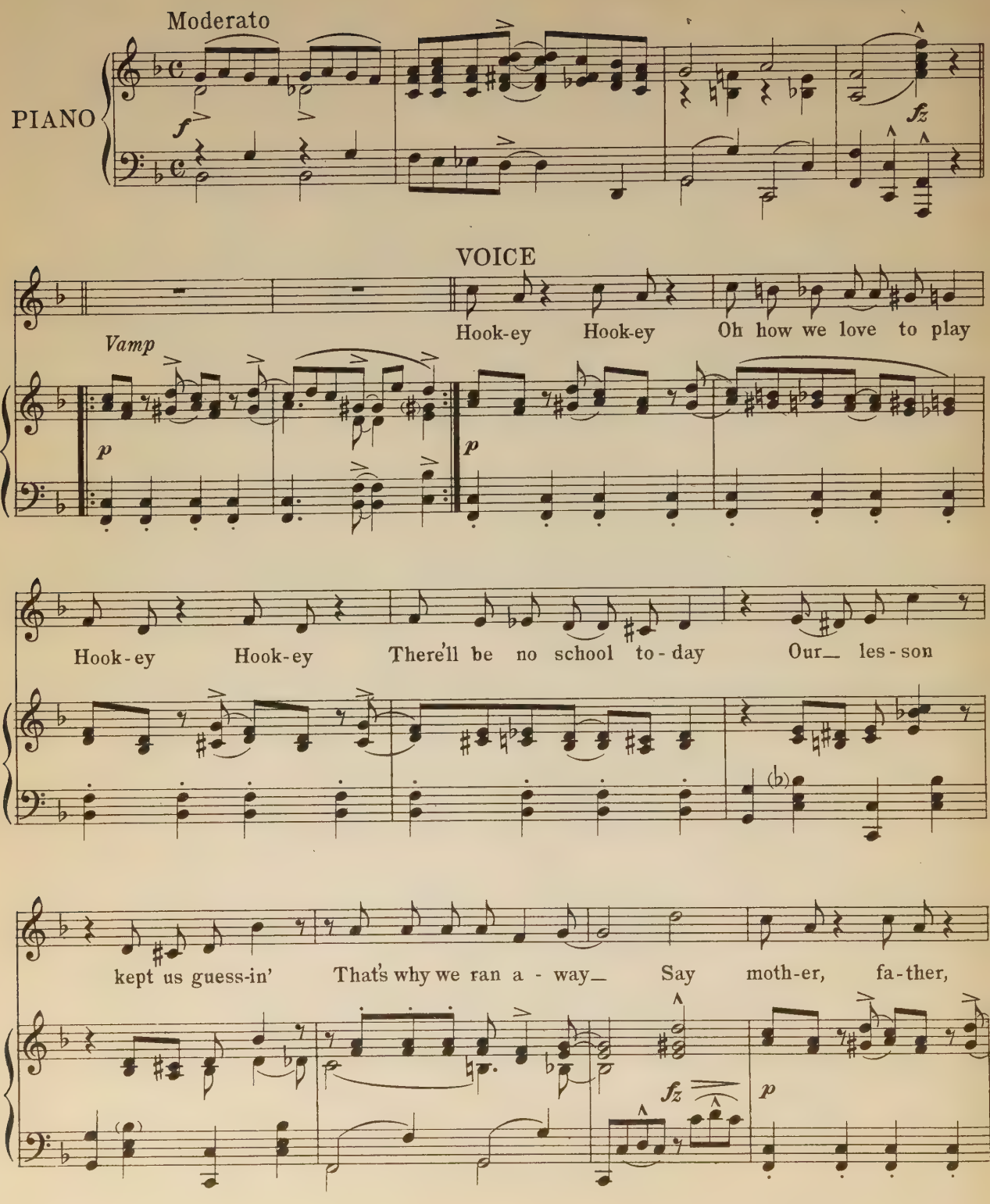
Chorus: Hes Long gone from Kentucky,
Long gone that guy is some lucky,
Long gone from this queen.
Long gone from Bowling Green.

7. When prohibition said I'll lick John Barleycorn
I never thought she'd do any harm
But she's chased him strong, didn't stop to wait
And blacked his eye in every state.

Chorus: Now John's gone and he left me weeping,
Long gone but only sleeping,
But from the drug we catch his breath,
Long gone and scared to death.

THE SCHOOLHOUSE BLUES

Words and Music by
IRVING BERLIN


Moderato
PIANO
VOICE
Hook-ey Hook-ey Oh how we love to play
Vamp
Hook-ey Hook-ey There'll be no school to-day Our_ les-son
kept us guess-in' That's why we ran a-way_ Say moth-er, fa-ther,

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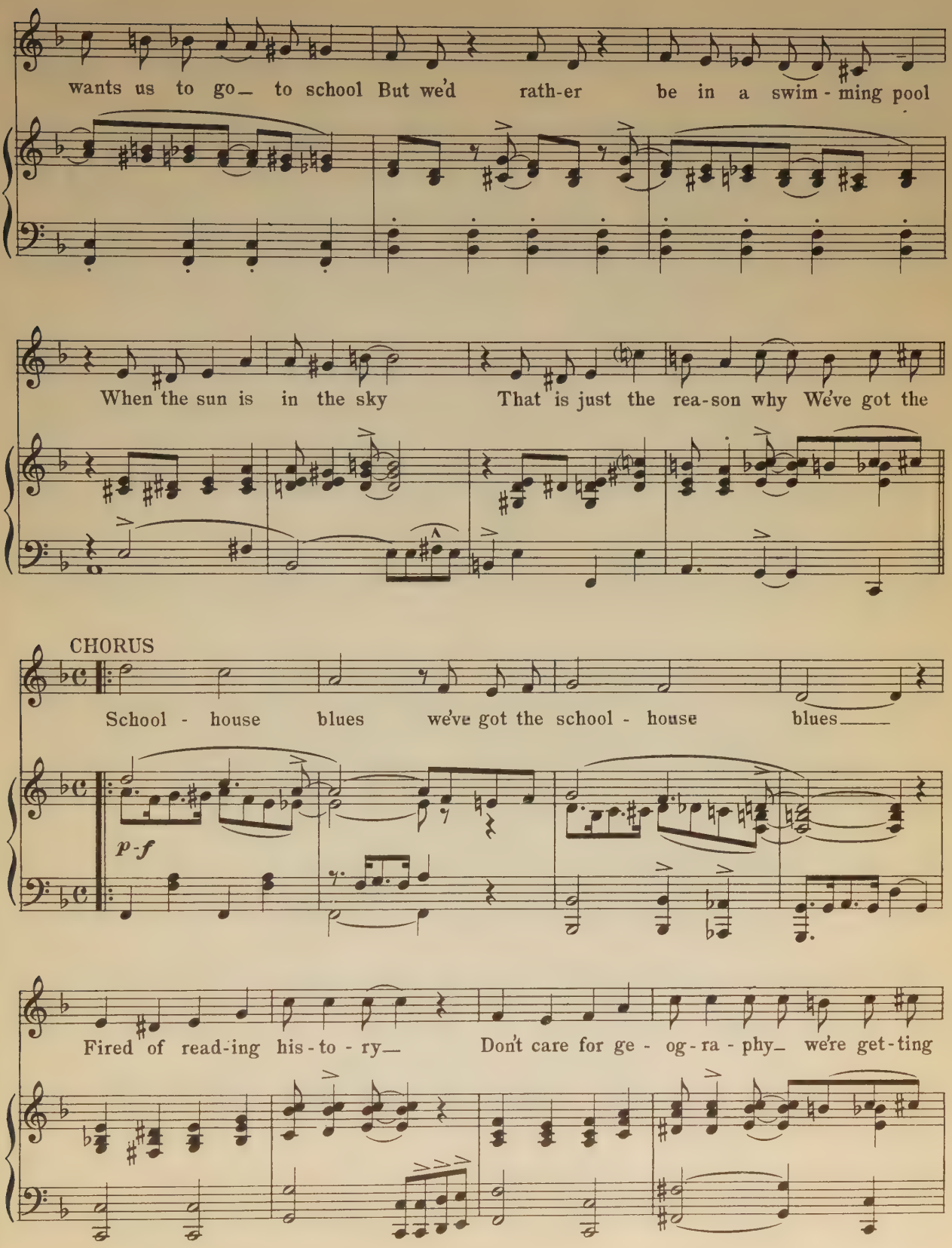
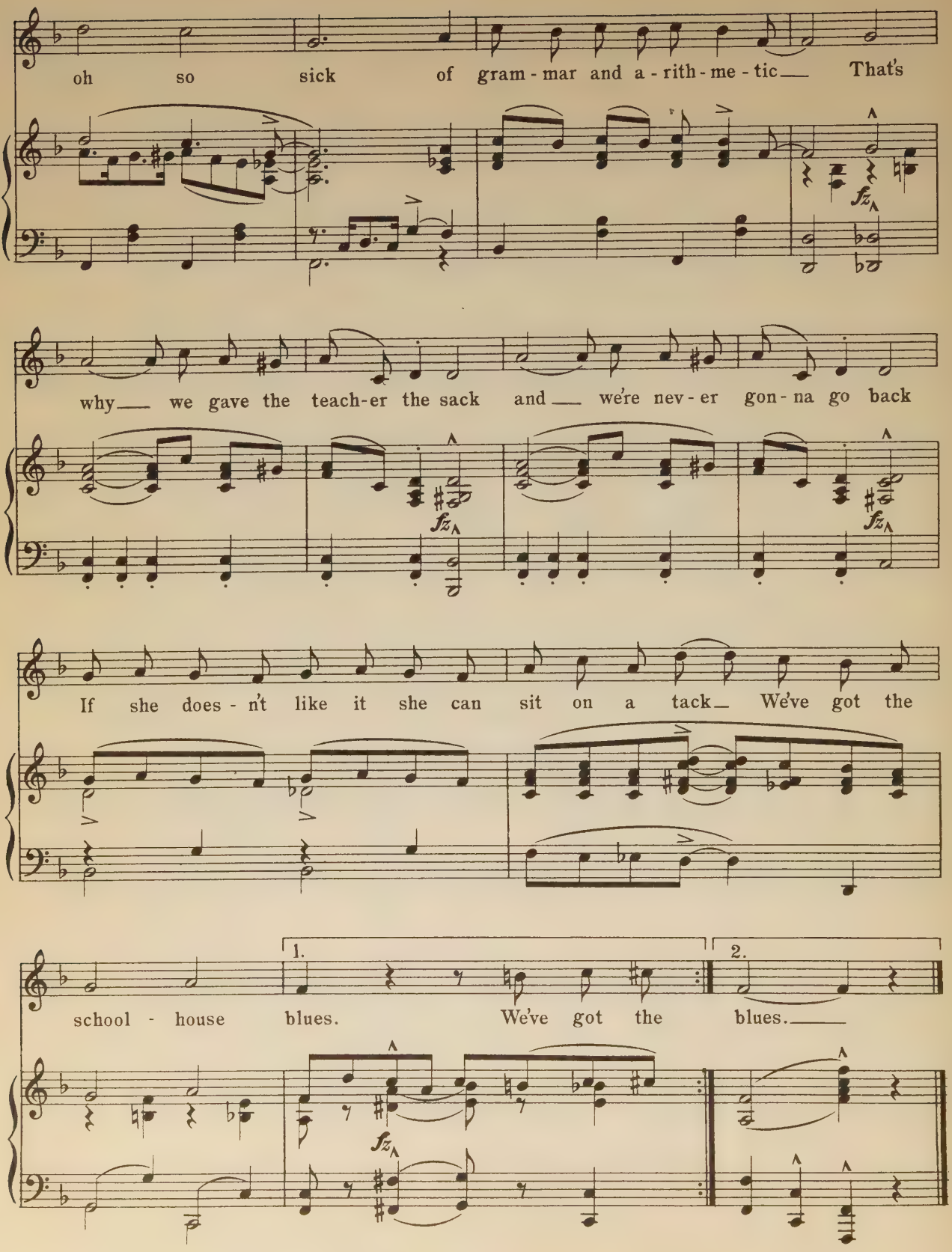
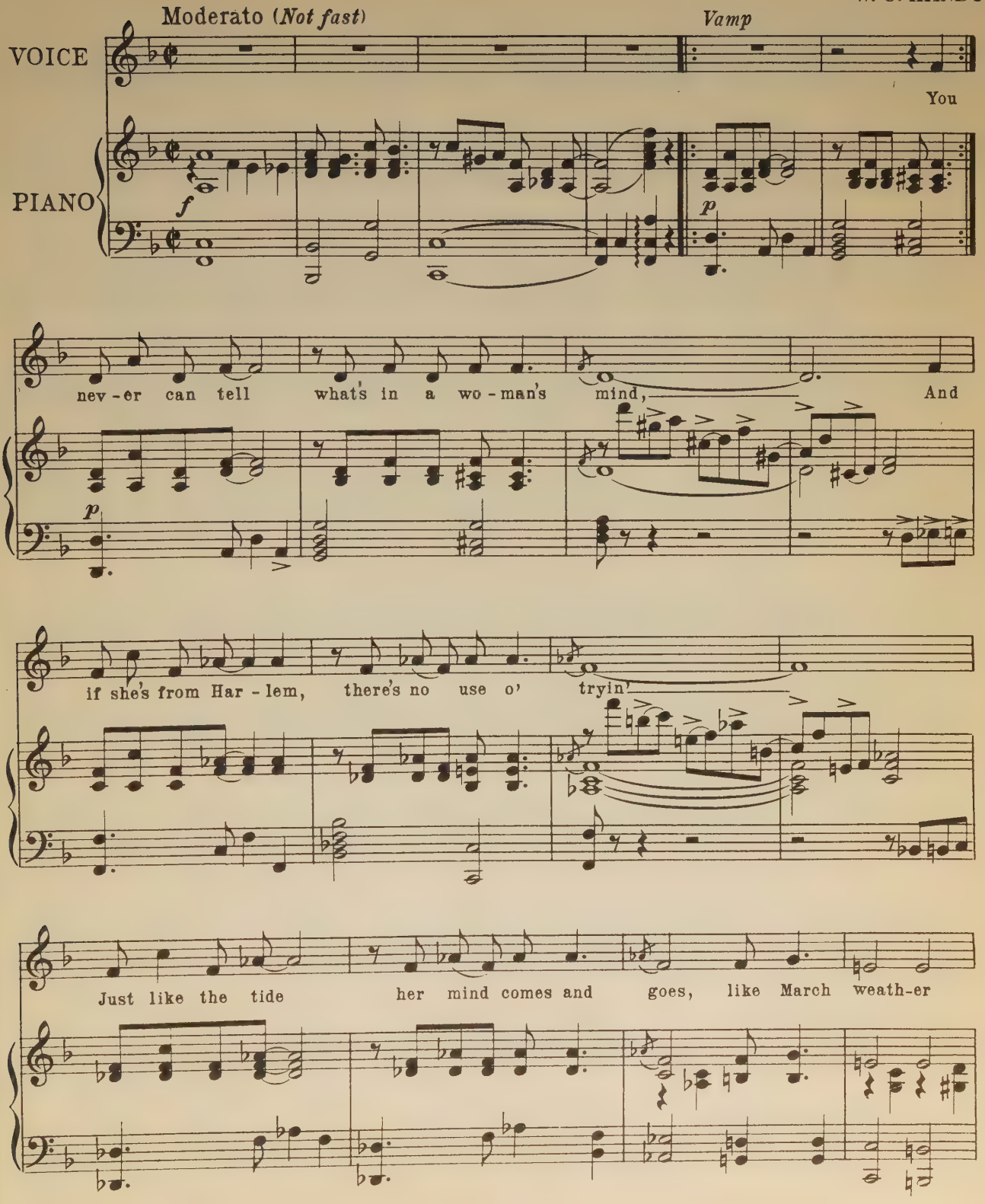

wants us to go_ to school But we'd rath-er be in a swim - ming pool
When the sun is in the sky That is just the rea-son why We've got the
CHORUS
School - house blues we've got the school - house blues_____
p-f
Fired of read-ing his - to - ry_ Don't care for ge - og - ra - phy_ we're get-ting


oh so sick of gram - mar and a - rith - me - tic That's
why we gave the teach-er the sack and we're nev - er gon - na go back
If she does - n't like it she can sit on a tack We've got the
1.
2.
school - house blues. We've got the blues.

HARLEM BLUES

W. C. HANDY



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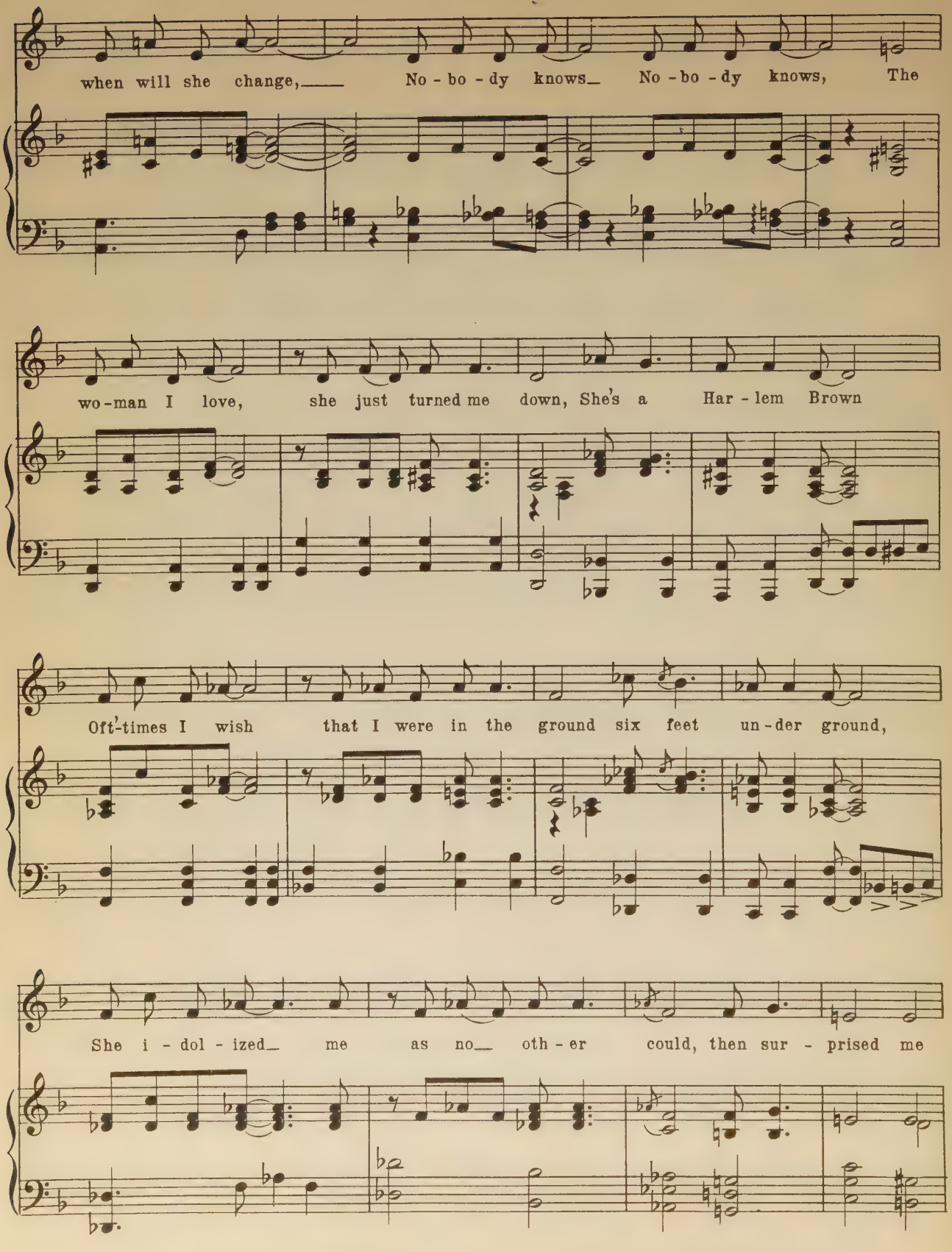
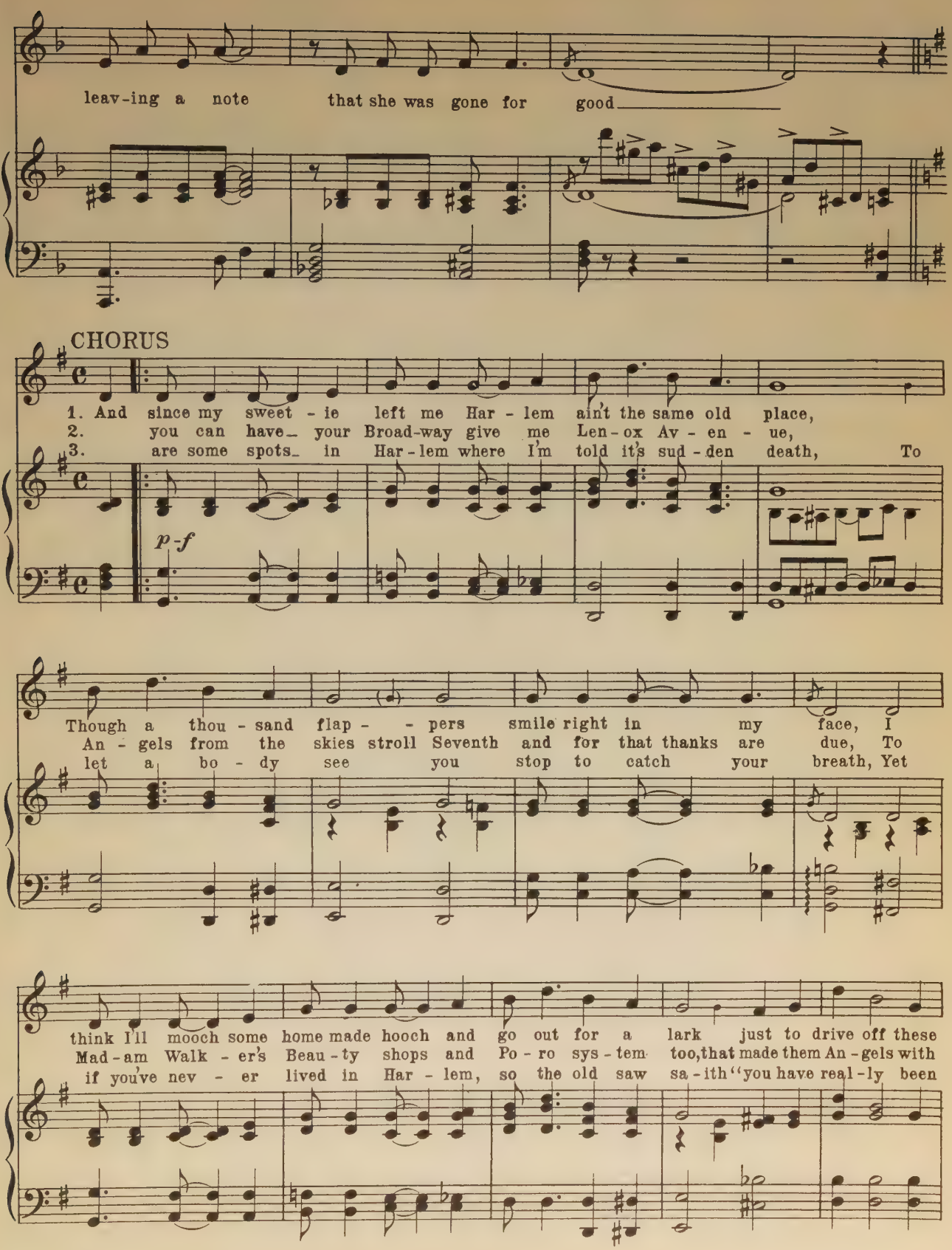
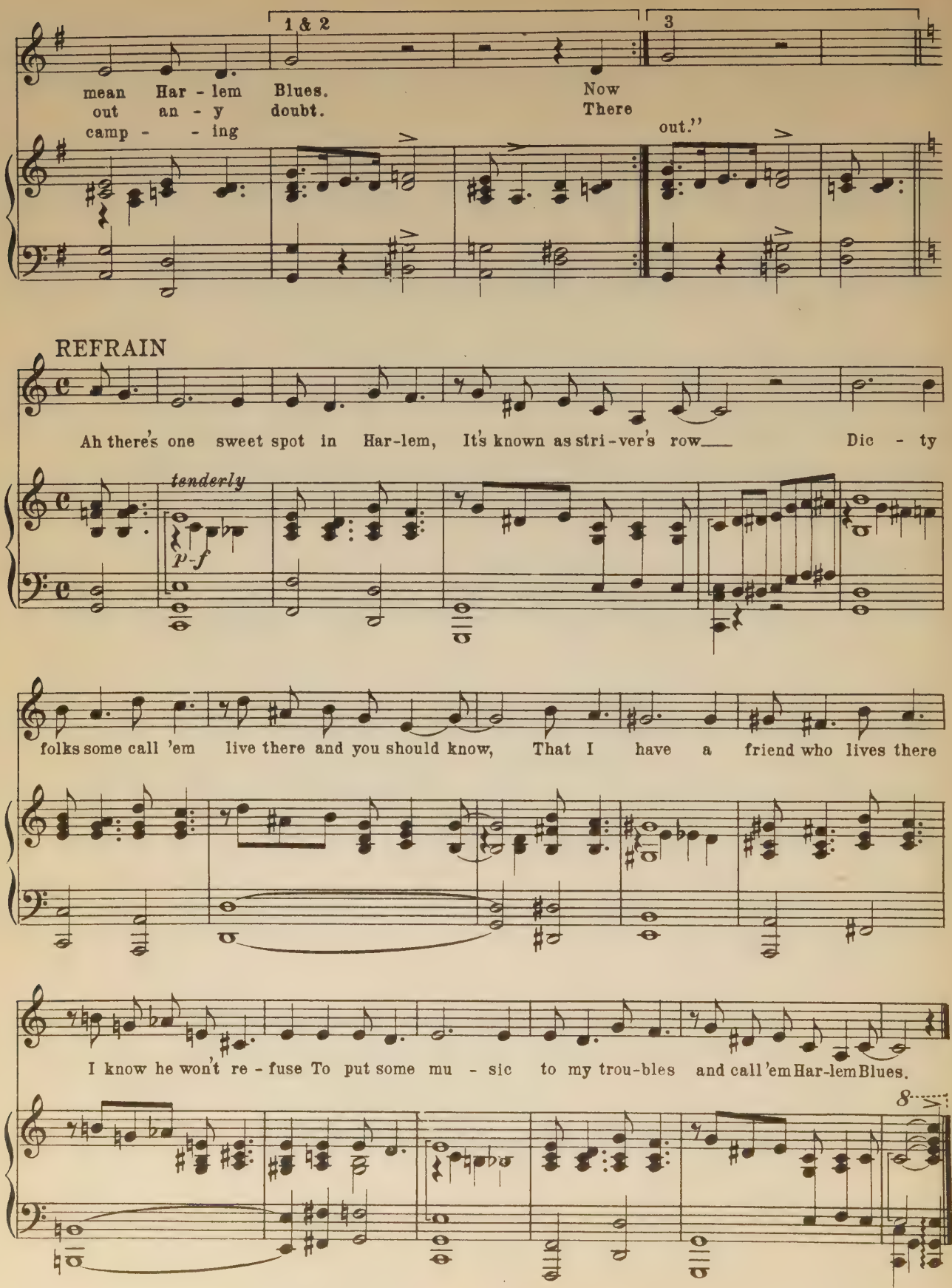
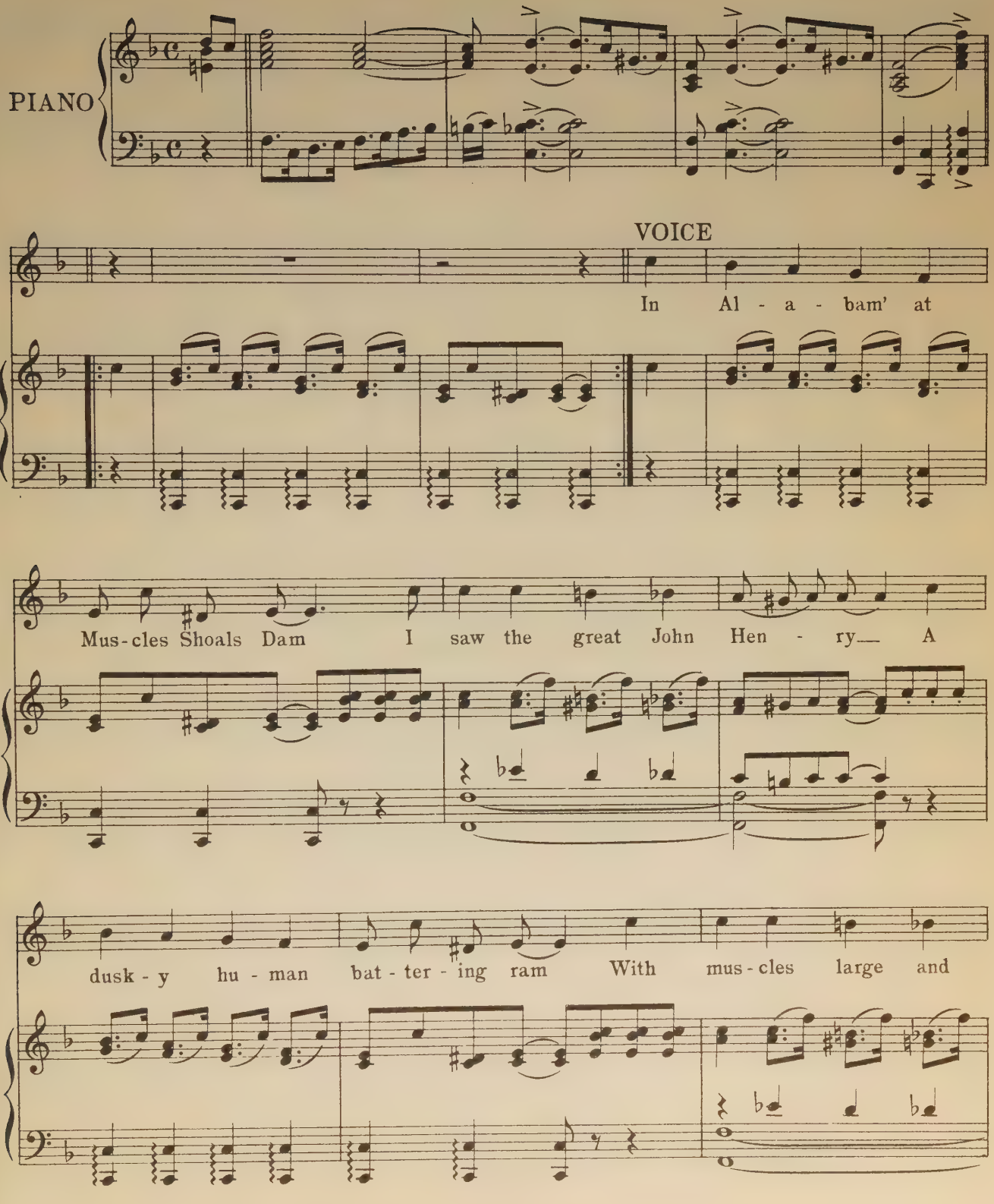

when will she change, No - bo - dy knows No - bo - dy knows, The
wo-man I love, she just turned me down, She's a Har - lem Brown
Oft'-times I wish that I were in the ground six feet un - der ground,
She i - dol - ized me as no oth - er could, then sur - prised me


leav-ing a note that she was gone for good
CHORUS
1. And since my sweet - ie left me Har - lem ain't the same old place,
2. you can have your Broad-way give me Len-ox Av - en - ue,
3. are some spots in Har-lem where I'm told it's sud - den death, To
p - f
Though a thou - sand flap - - pers smile right in my face, I
An - gels from the skies stroll Seventh and for that thanks are due, To
let a bo - dy see you stop to catch your breath, Yet
think I'll mooch some home made hooch and go out for a lark just to drive off these
Mad-am Walk - er's Beau - ty shops and Po - ro sys - tem too, that made them An - gels with
if you've nev - er lived in Har - lem, so the old saw sa - ith "you have real - ly been


1 & 2
3
mean Har - lem Blues. Now
out an - y doubt. There
camp - - ing out."
REFRAIN
Ah there's one sweet spot in Har-lem, It's known as stri-ver's row___ Dic - ty
tenderly
p-f
folks some call 'em live there and you should know, That I have a friend who lives there
I know he won't re - fuse To put some mu - sic to my trou-bles and call 'em Har-lem Blues.
8

JOHN HENRY BLUES

W. C. HANDY



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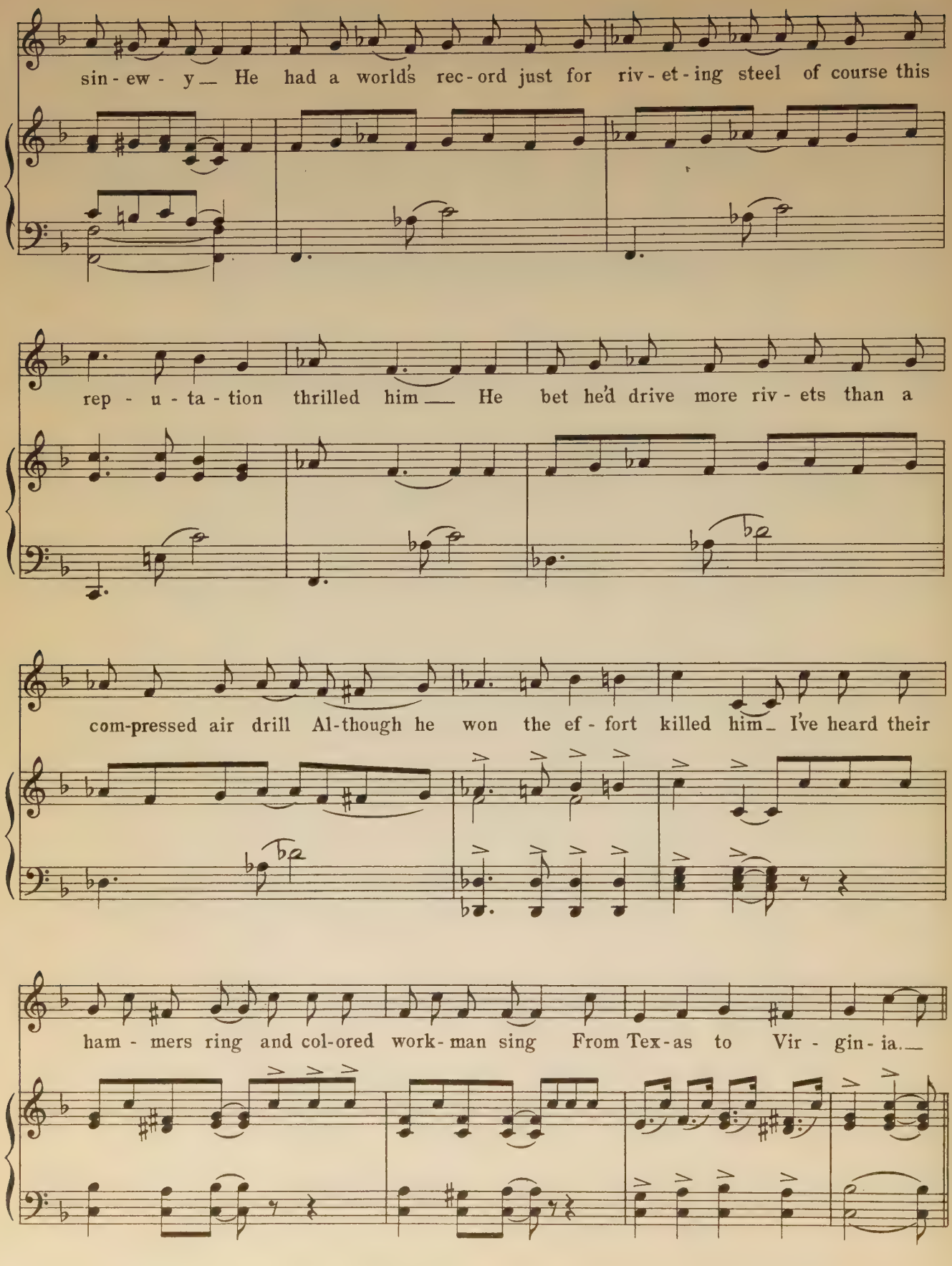
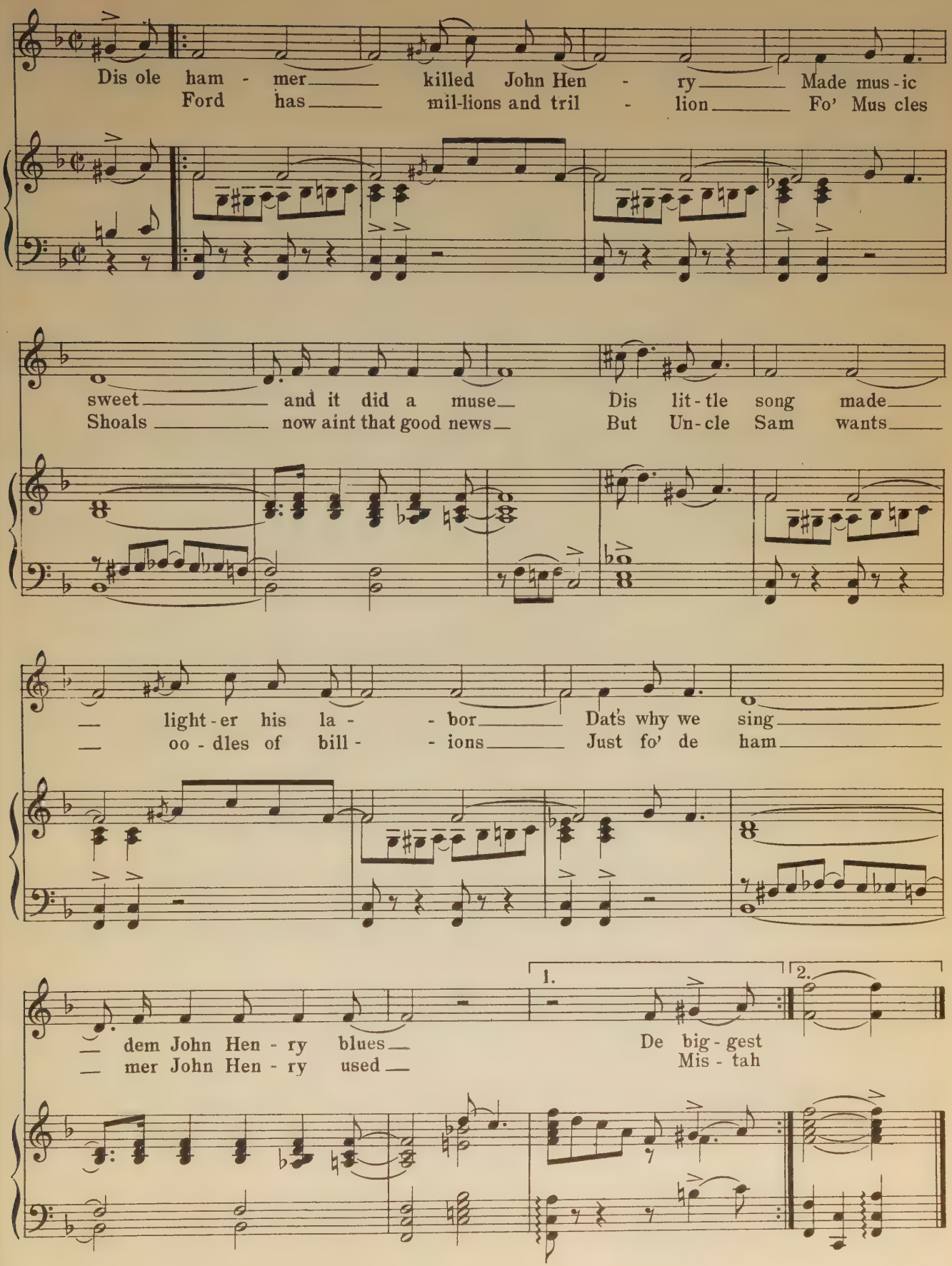
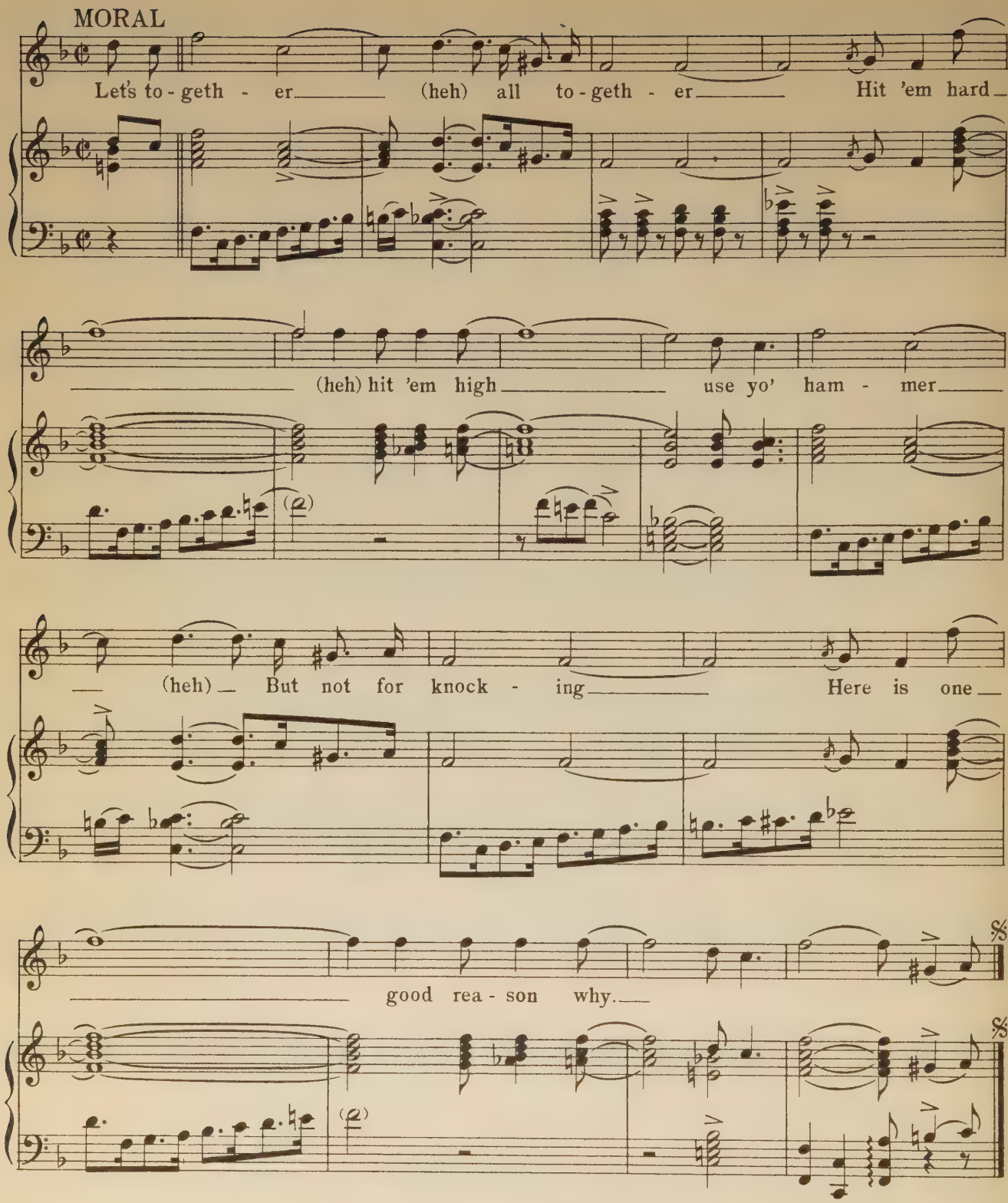

sin - ew - y — He had a world's rec - ord just for riv - et - ing steel of course this
rep - u - ta - tion thrilled him — He bet he'd drive more riv - ets than a
com-pressed air drill Al-though he won the ef - fort killed him — I've heard their
ham - mers ring and col-ored work-man sing From Tex-as to Vir - gin - ia.—


Dis ole ham - mer killed John Hen - ry Made mus - ic
Ford has mil-lions and tril - lion Fo' Mus cles
sweet and it did a muse Dis lit - tle song made
Shoals now aint that good news But Un - cle Sam wants
light - er his la - - bor Dat's why we sing
oo - dles of bill - - ions Just fo' de ham
dem John Hen - ry blues
mer John Hen - ry used
1.
De big - gest
Mis - tah
2.


MORAL
Let's to - geth - er (heh) all to - geth - er Hit 'em hard
(heh) hit 'em high use yo' ham - mer
(heh) But not for knock - ing Here is one
good rea - son why.

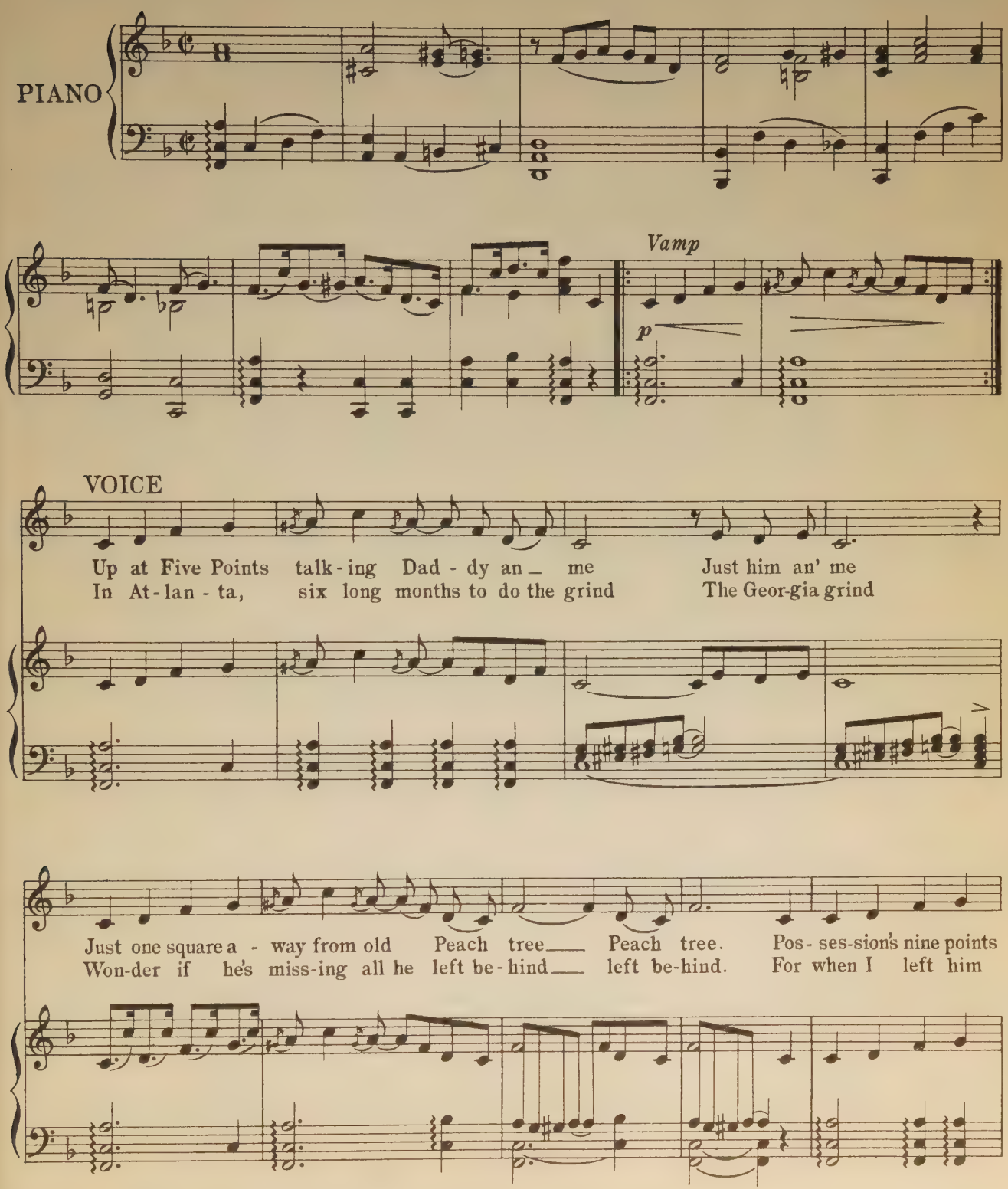
Politicians knocked our liquor
So they took away our booze
Now the spenders and bar tenders
Harmonize John Henry Blues.

MORAL

And when misfortune seems to trail us
And the things we prize we lose
Just keep hammering this will never fail us
Smile and sing John Henry Blues

ATLANTA BLUES
(MAKE ME ONE PALLET ON YOUR FLOOR)

By W. C. HANDY
and
DAVE ELMAN


PIANO
Vamp
p
VOICE
Up at Five Points talk-ing Dad-dy an_ me Just him an' me
In At-lan-ta, six long months to do the grind The Geor-gia grind
Just one square a-way from old Peach tree___ Peach tree. Pos-ses-sion's nine points
Won-der if he's miss-ing all he left be-hind___ left be-hind. For when I left him

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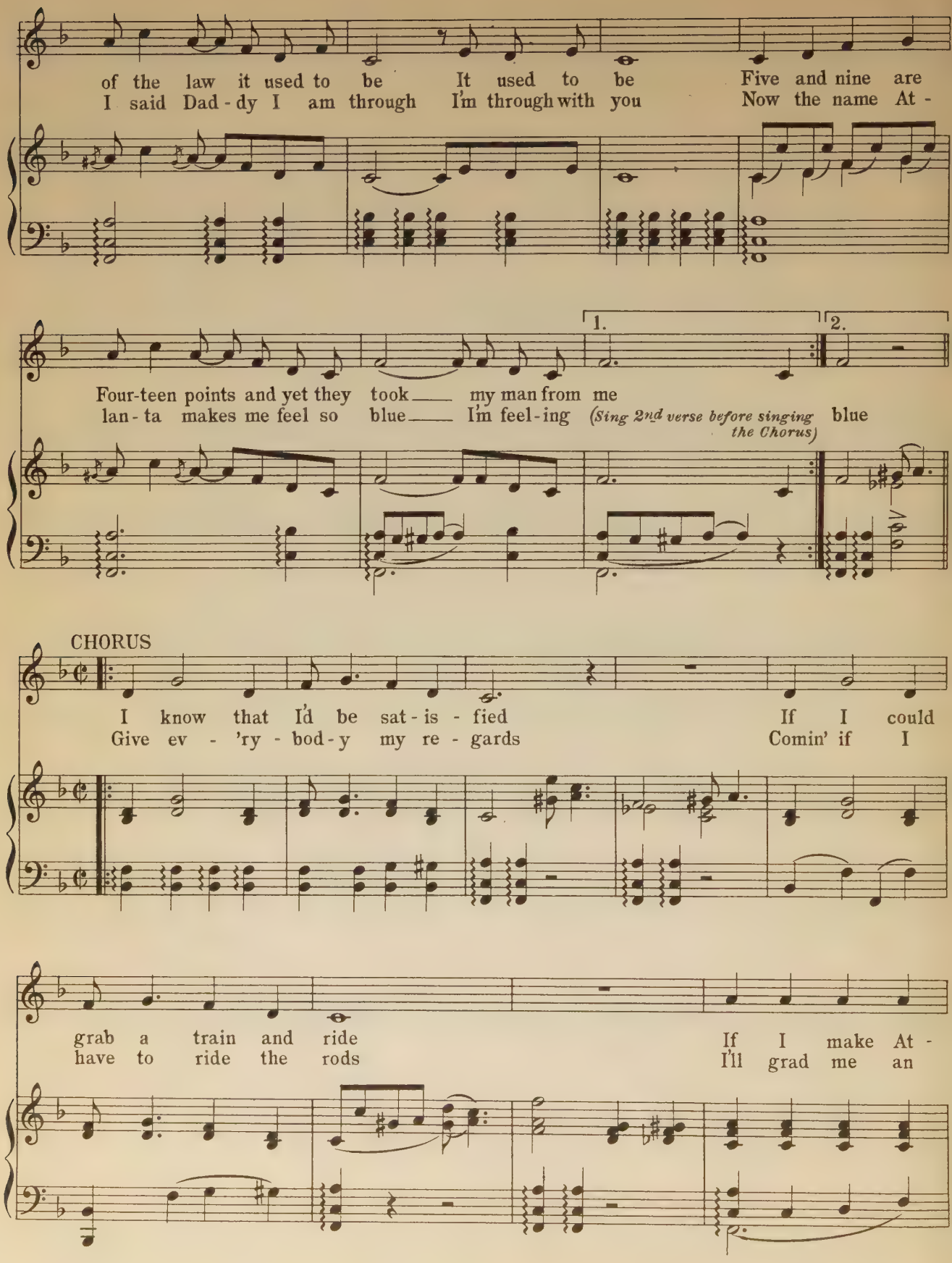
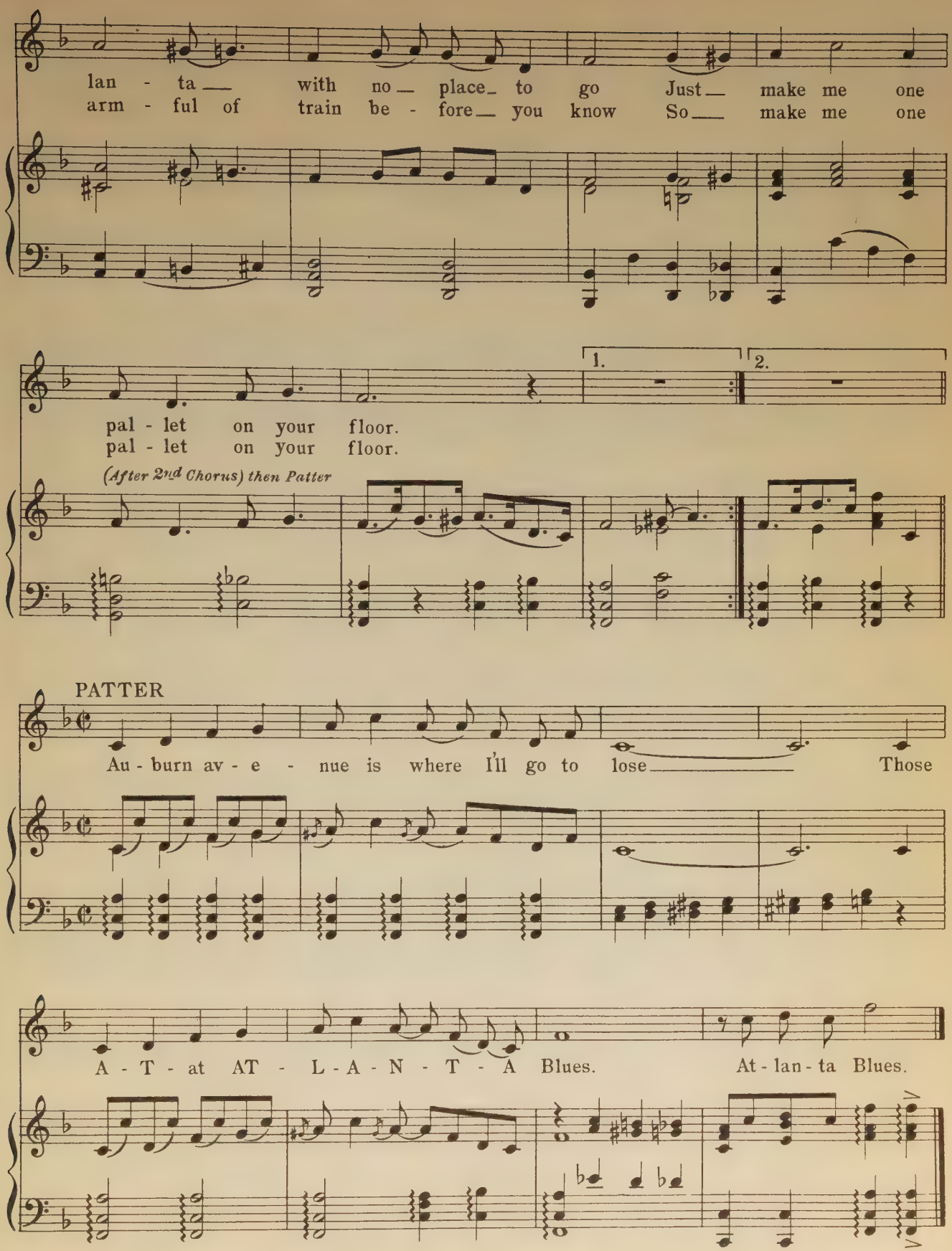
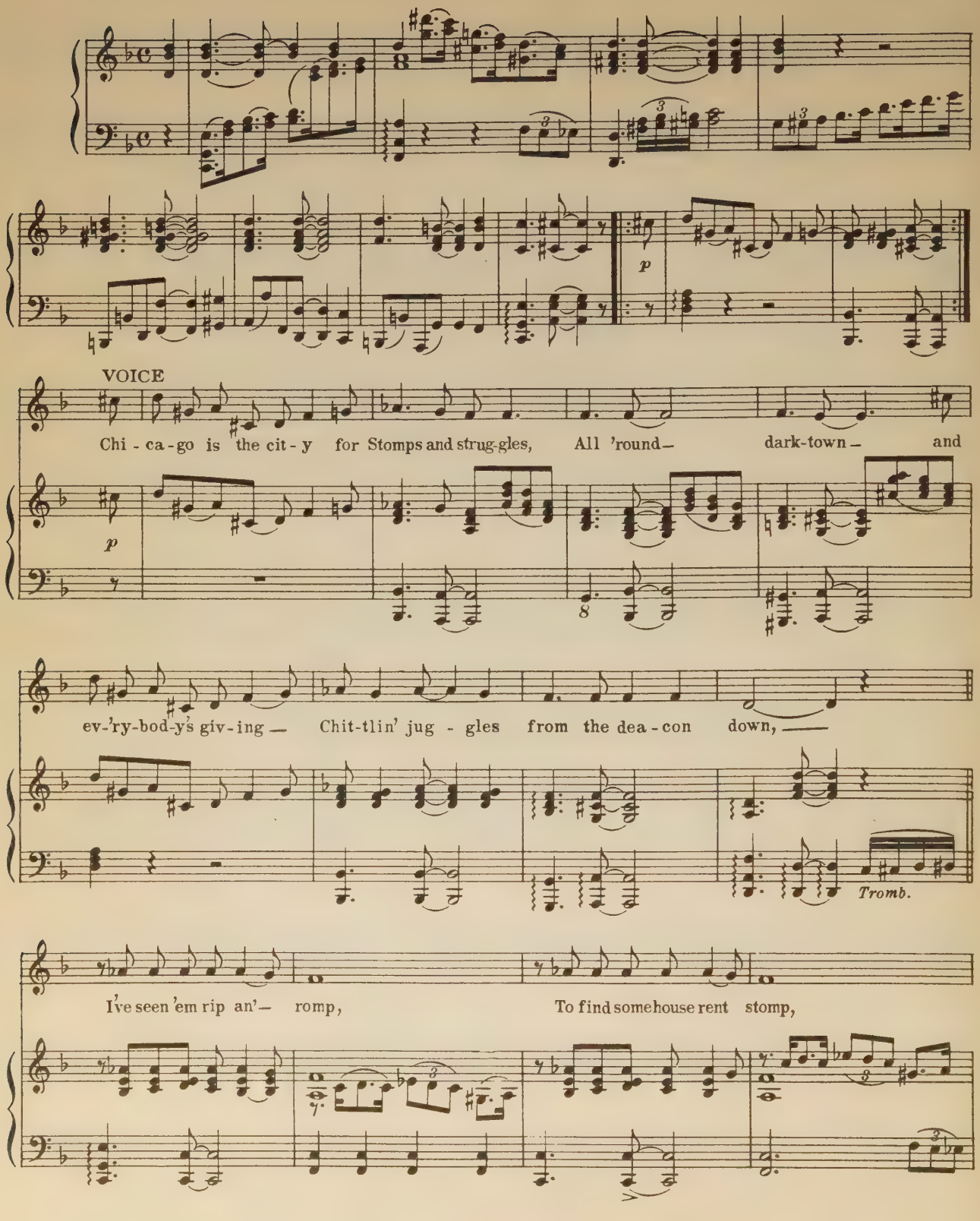

of the law it used to be It used to be Five and nine are
I said Dad-dy I am through I'm through with you Now the name At-
1.
2.
Four-teen points and yet they took my man from me
lan-ta makes me feel so blue I'm feel-ing blue
(Sing 2nd verse before singing the Chorus)
CHORUS
I know that I'd be sat-is-fied If I could
Give ev-'ry-bod-y my re-gards Comin' if I
grab a train and ride If I make At-
have to ride the rods I'll grad me an


lan - ta with no place to go Just make me one
arm - ful of train be - fore you know So make me one
1.
2.
pal - let on your floor.
pal - let on your floor.
(After 2nd Chorus) then Patter
PATTER
Au - burn av - e - nue is where I'll go to lose Those
A - T - at AT - L - A - N - T - A Blues. At - lan - ta Blues.

THE CHICAGO GOUGE

W. C. HANDY


VOICE
Chi - ca - go is the cit - y for Stomps and strug-gles, All 'round— dark-town— and
ev-'ry-bod-y's giv-ing— Chit-tlin' jug - gles from the dea - con down,—
Tromb.
I've seen 'em rip an'— romp, To find some house rent stomp,

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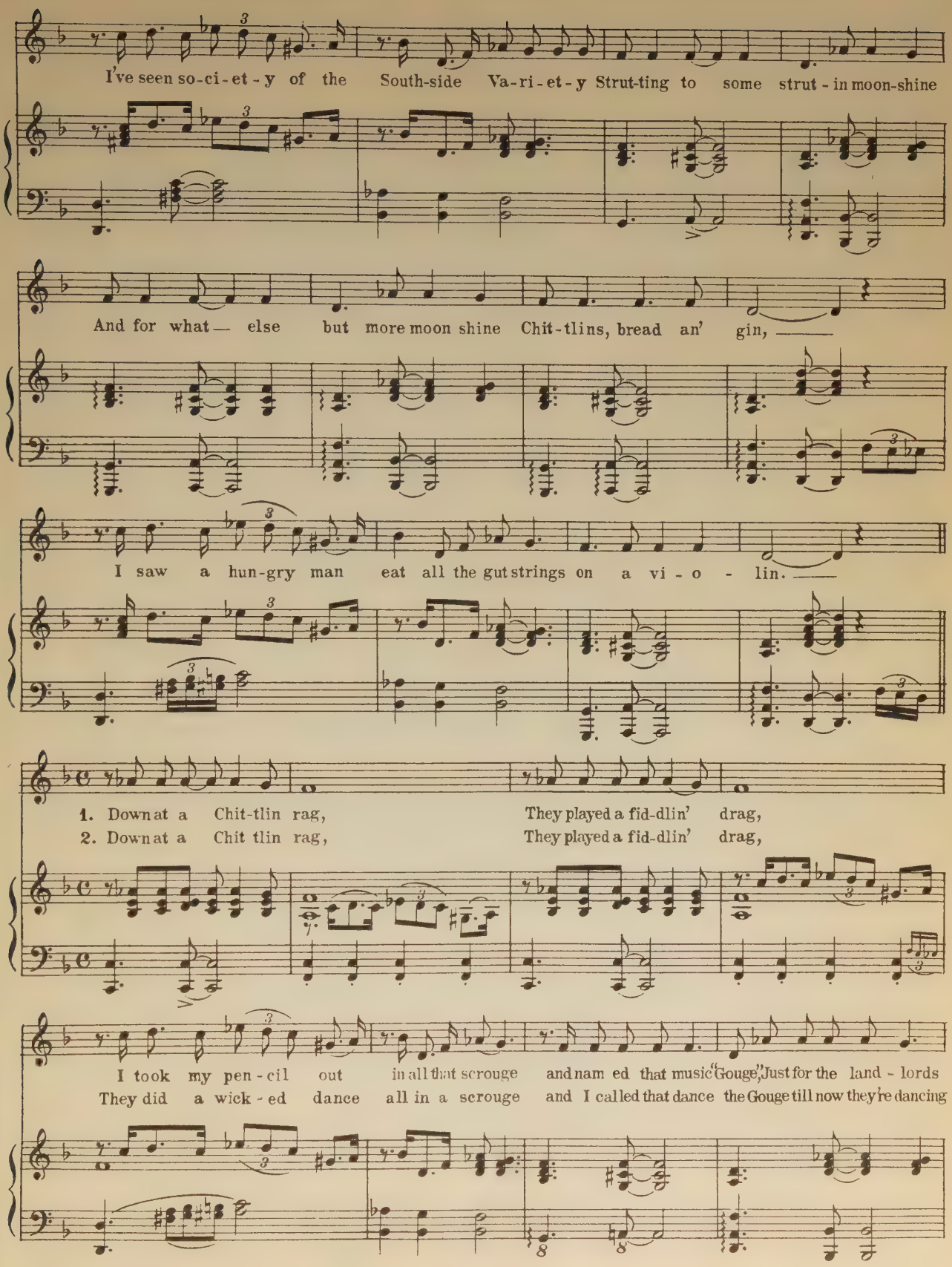
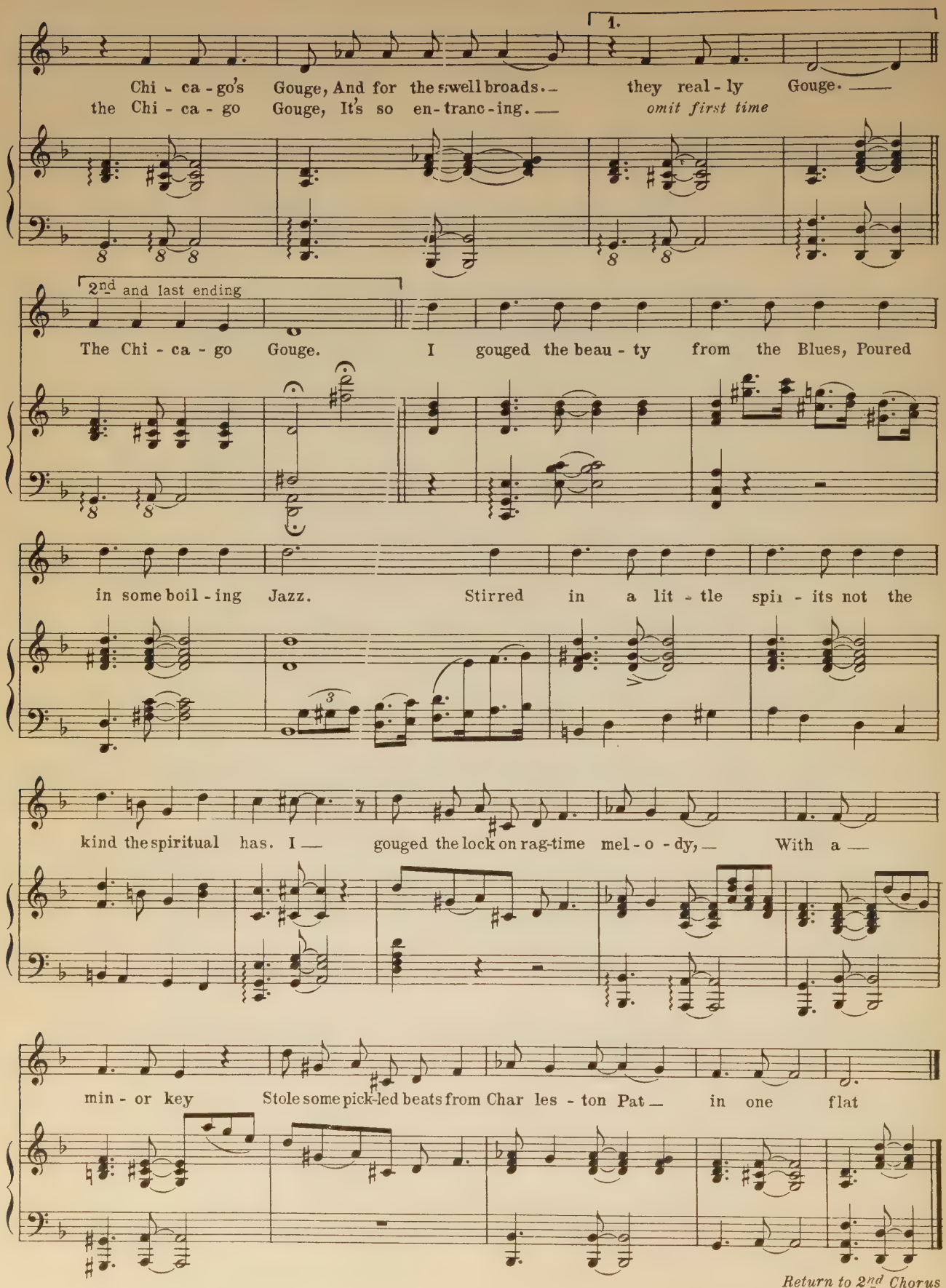
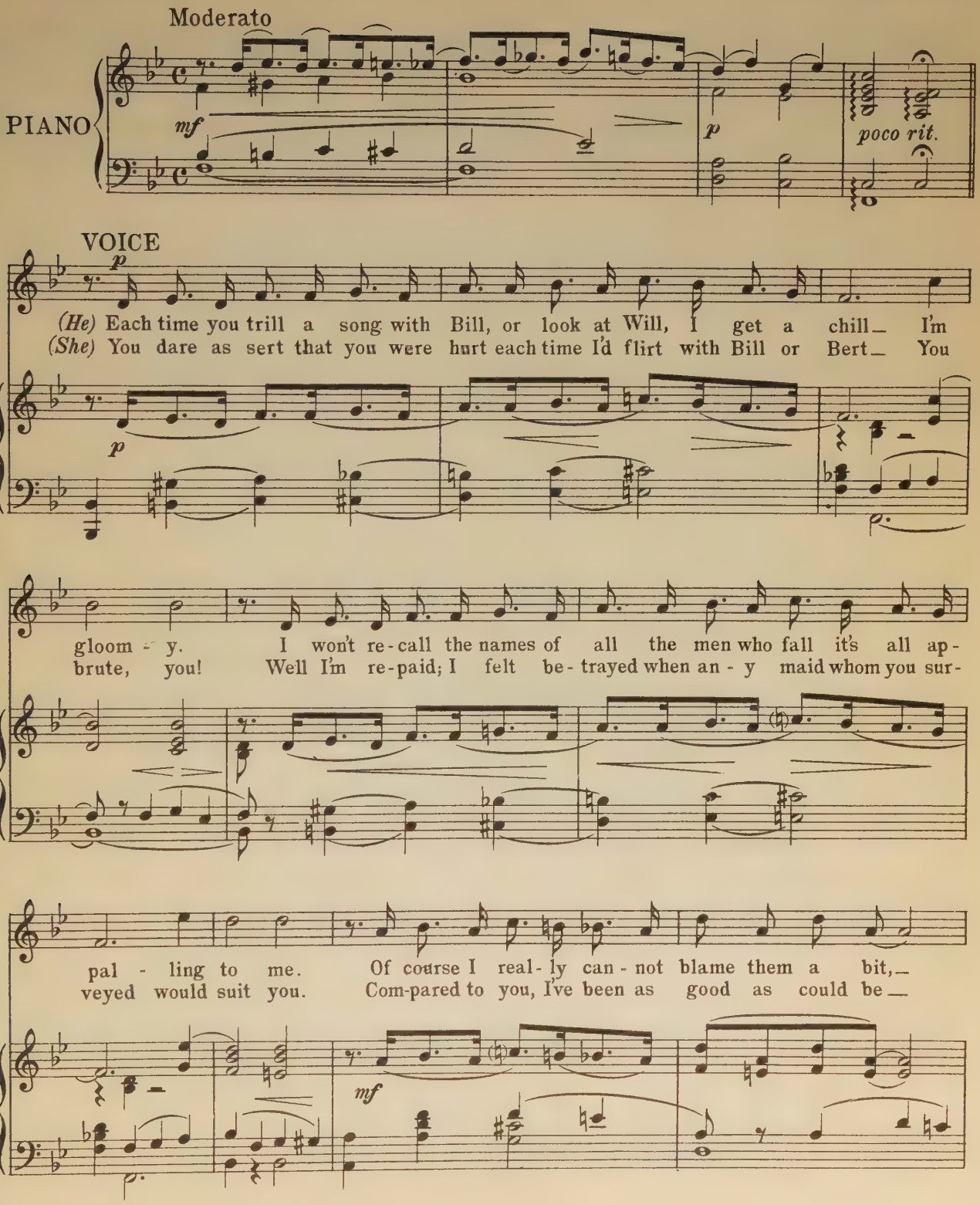

I've seen so-ci-et-y of the South-side Va-ri-et-y Strut-ting to some strut-in moon-shine
And for what — else but more moon shine Chit-tlins, bread an' gin, ——
I saw a hun-gry man eat all the gut strings on a vi-o-lin. ——
1. Down at a Chit-tlin rag, They played a fid-dlin' drag,
2. Down at a Chit tlin rag, They played a fid-dlin' drag,
I took my pen-cil out in all that scrouge and nam ed that music "Gouge," Just for the land-lords
They did a wick-ed dance all in a scrouge and I called that dance the Gouge till now they're dancing


1.
Chi - ca - go's Gouge, And for the swell broads. — they real - ly Gouge. —
the Chi - ca - go Gouge, It's so en-tranc-ing. — omit first time
2nd and last ending
The Chi - ca - go Gouge. I gouged the beau - ty from the Blues, Poured
in some boil - ing Jazz. Stirred in a lit - tle spi - its not the
kind the spiritual has. I — gouged the lock on rag-time mel - o - dy, — With a —
min - or key Stole some pick-led beats from Char les - ton Pat — in one flat
Return to 2nd Chorus

THE HALF OF IT, DEARIE, BLUES

Words by
IRA GERSHWIN

Music by
GEORGE GERSHWIN


Moderato
PIANO
mf
p
poco rit.
VOICE
p
(He) Each time you trill a song with Bill, or look at Will, I get a chill— I'm
(She) You dare as sert that you were hurt each time I'd flirt with Bill or Bert— You
p
gloom - y. I won't re-call the names of all the men who fall it's all ap-
brute, you! Well I'm re-paid; I felt be-trayed when an - y maid whom you sur-
pal - ling to me. Of course I real-ly can-not blame them a bit,—
veyed would suit you. Com-pared to you, I've been as good as could be—
mf

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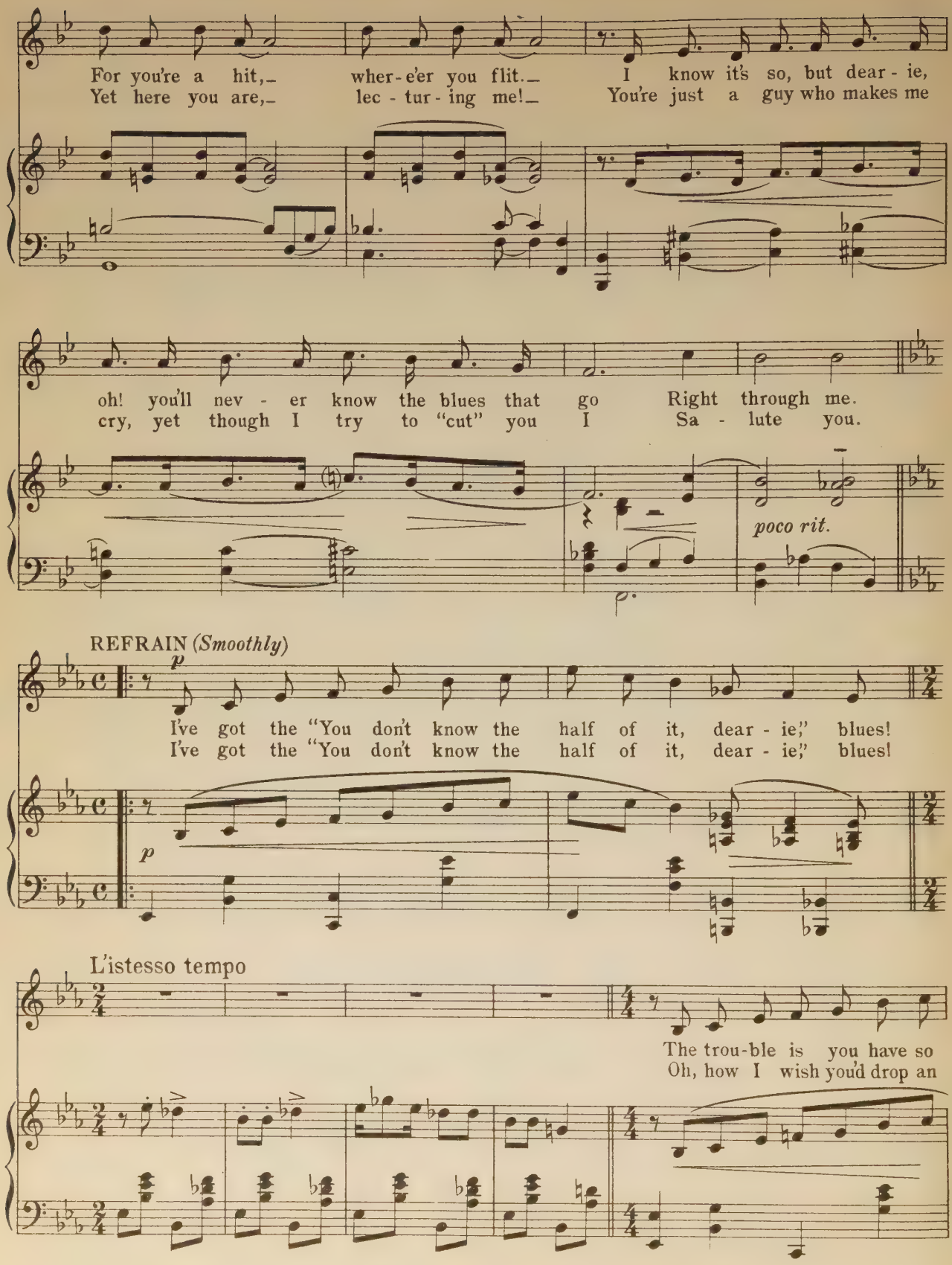
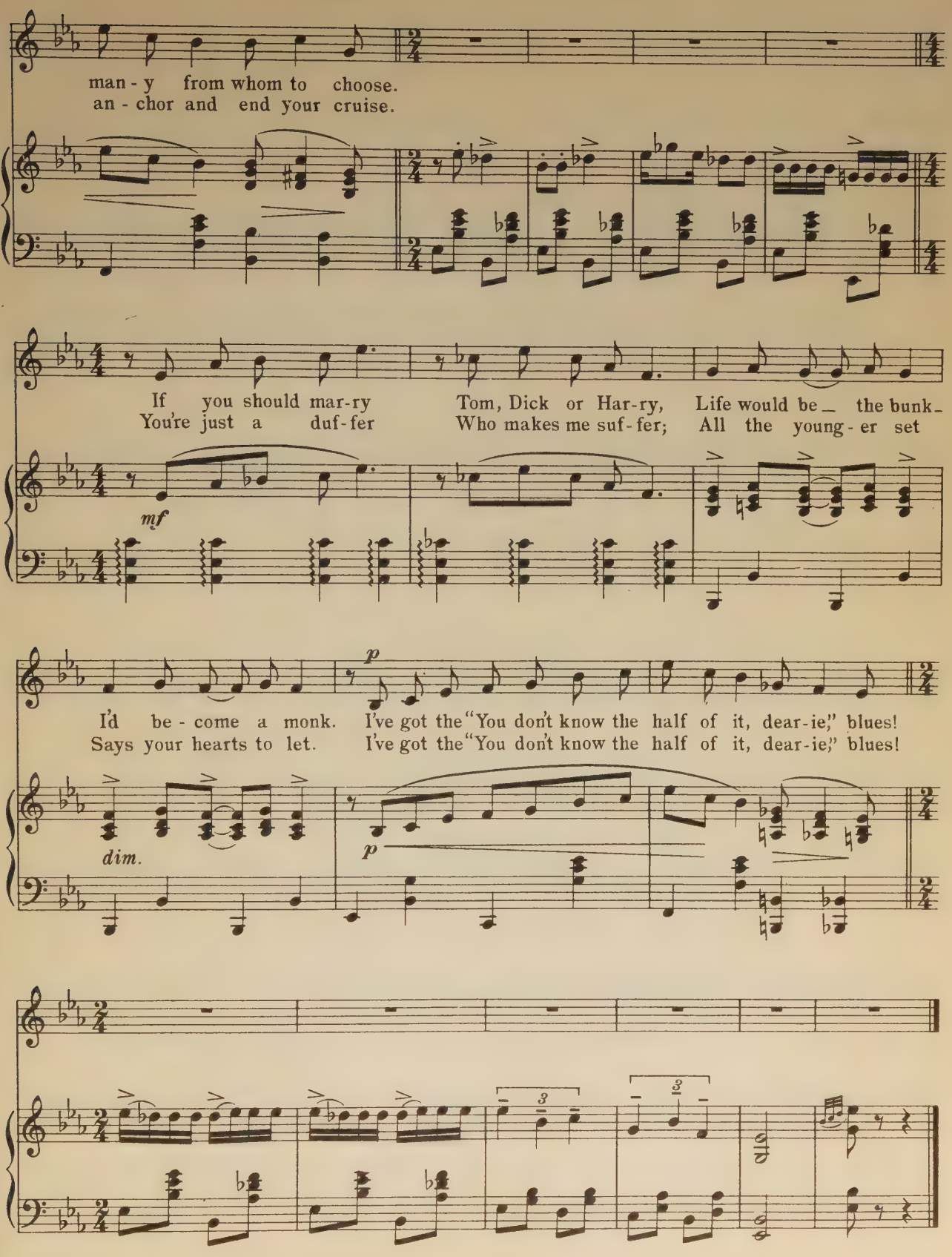
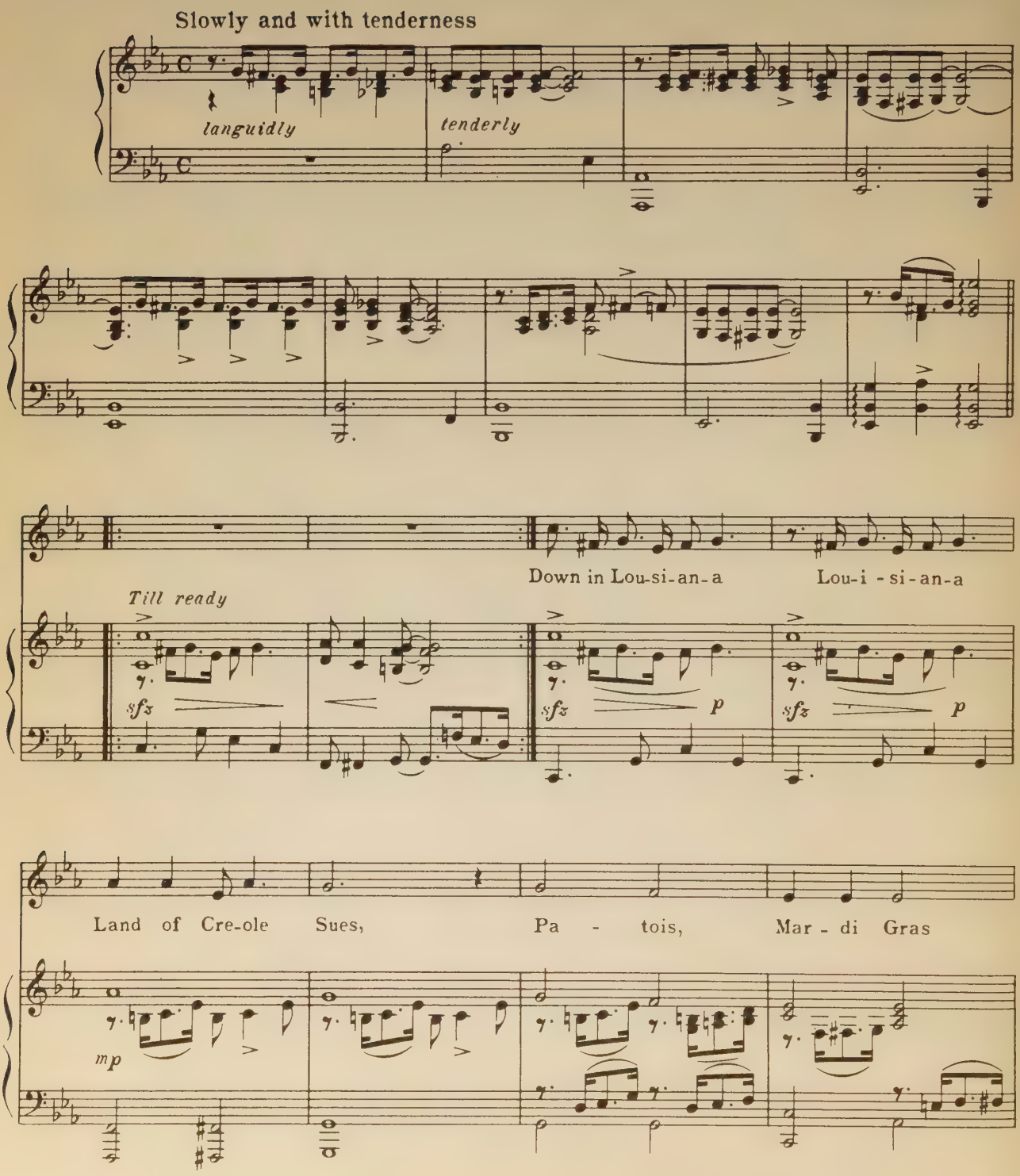

For you're a hit,
Yet here you are,
wher-e'er you flit.
lec - tur - ing me!
I know it's so, but dear - ie,
You're just a guy who makes me
oh! you'll nev - er know the blues that go Right through me.
cry, yet though I try to "cut" you I Sa - lute you.
poco rit.
REFRAIN (Smoothly)
p
I've got the "You don't know the half of it, dear - ie," blues!
I've got the "You don't know the half of it, dear - ie," blues!
p
L'istesso tempo
The trou-ble is you have so
Oh, how I wish you'd drop an


man - y from whom to choose.
an - chor and end your cruise.
If you should mar-ry Tom, Dick or Har-ry, Life would be the bunk-
You're just a duf-fer Who makes me suf-fer; All the young-er set
mf
I'd be - come a monk. I've got the "You don't know the half of it, dear-ie," blues!
Says your hearts to let. I've got the "You don't know the half of it, dear-ie," blues!
p
dim.
p

CHANTEZ LES BAS

Words and Music by
W. C. HANDY



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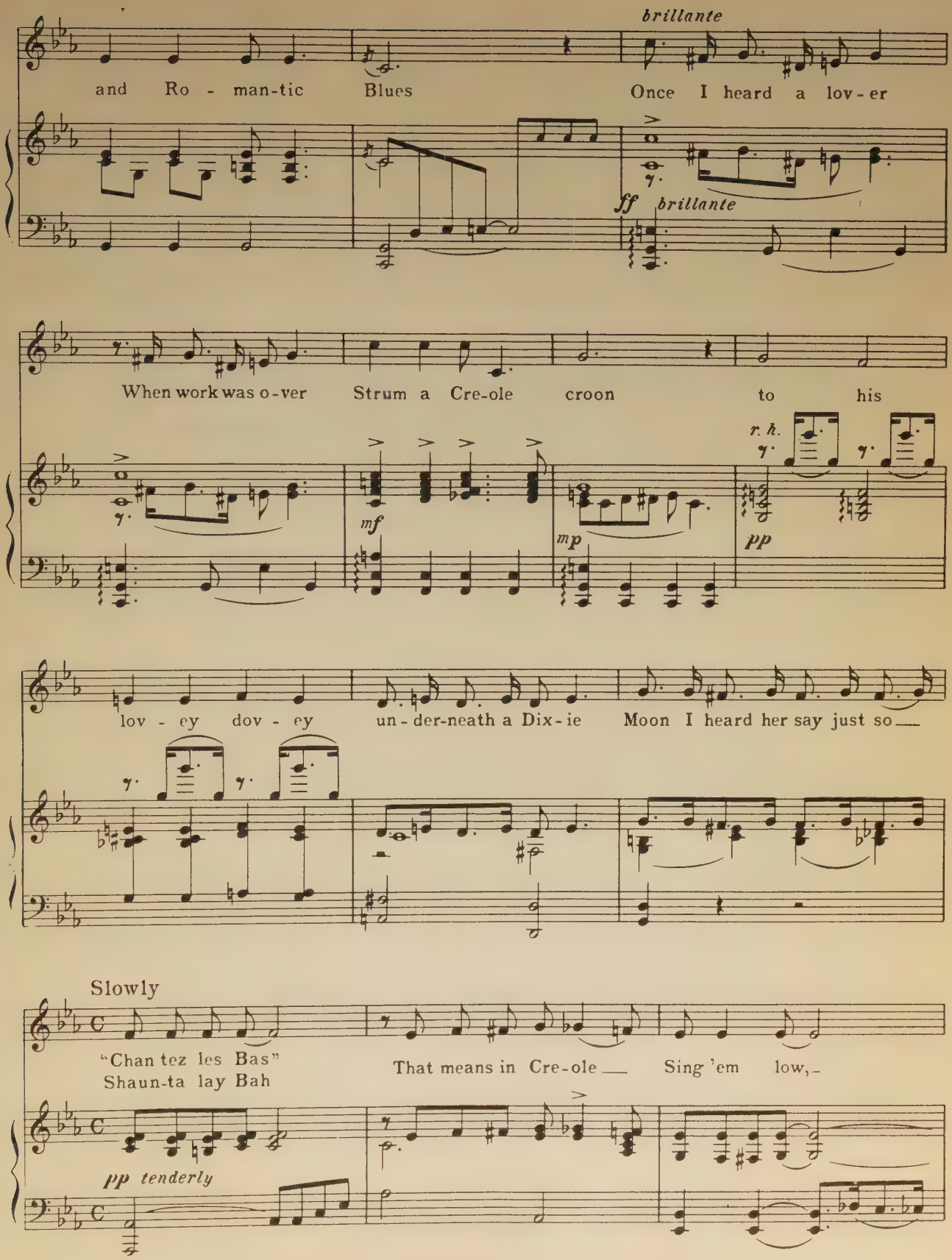
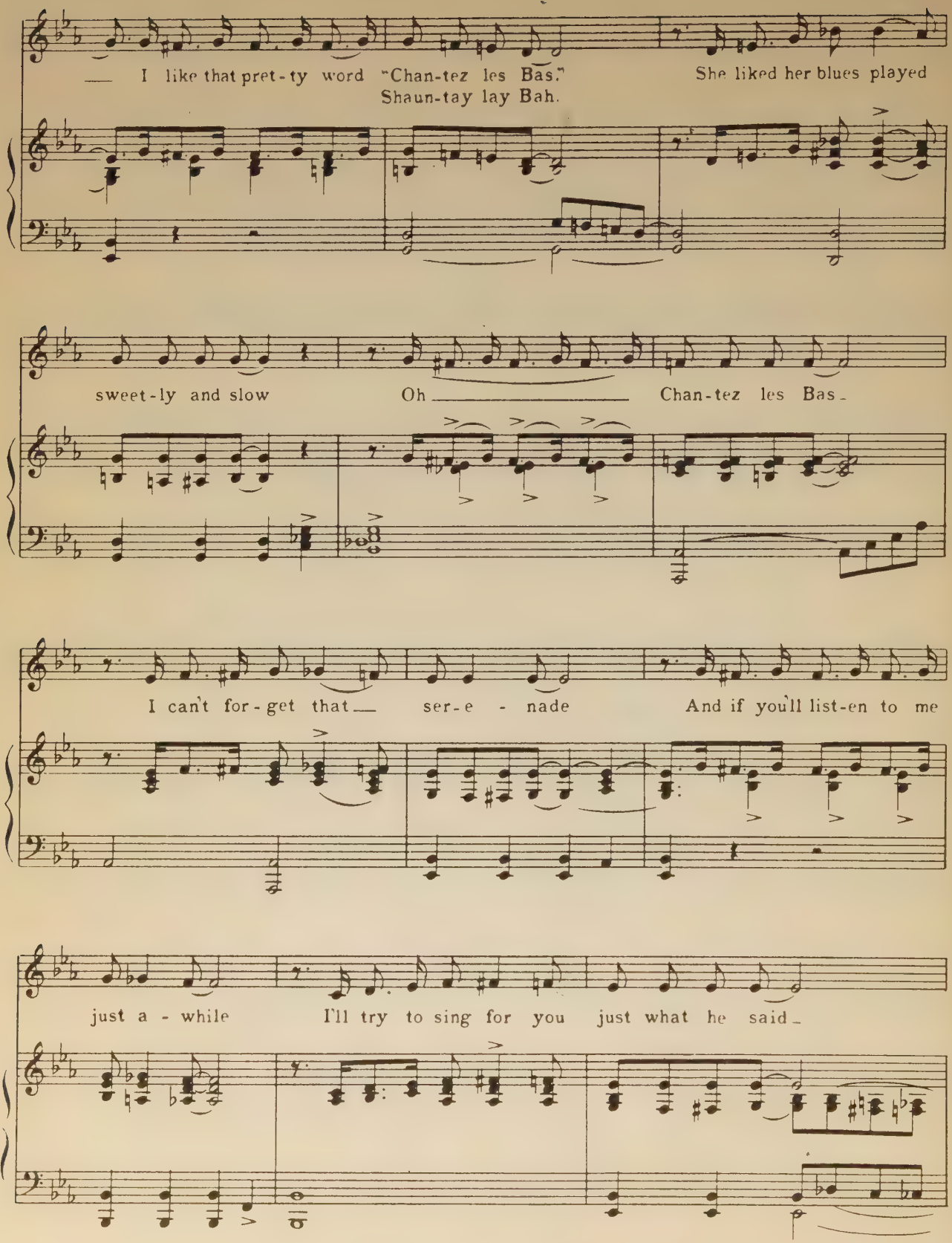
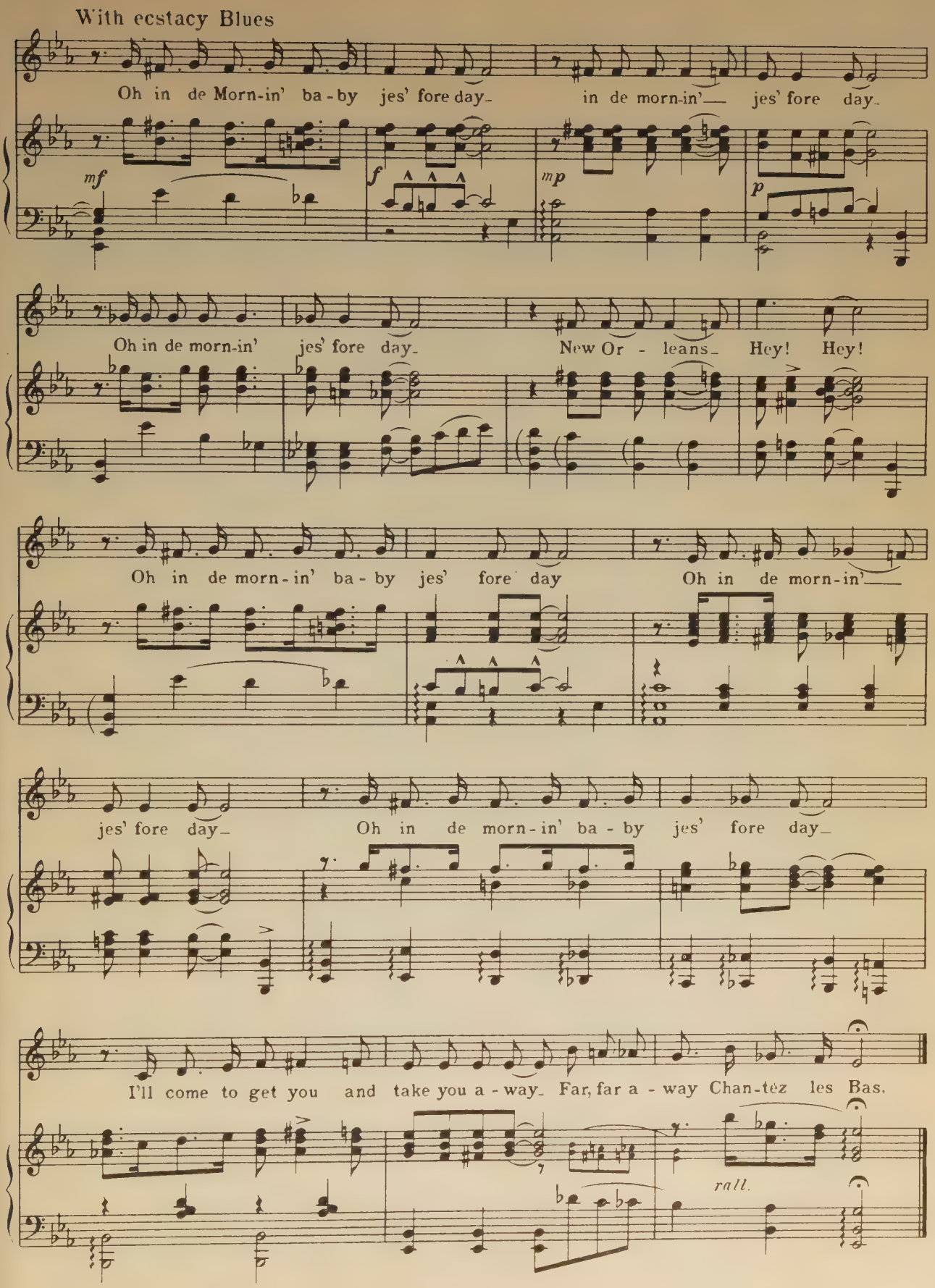
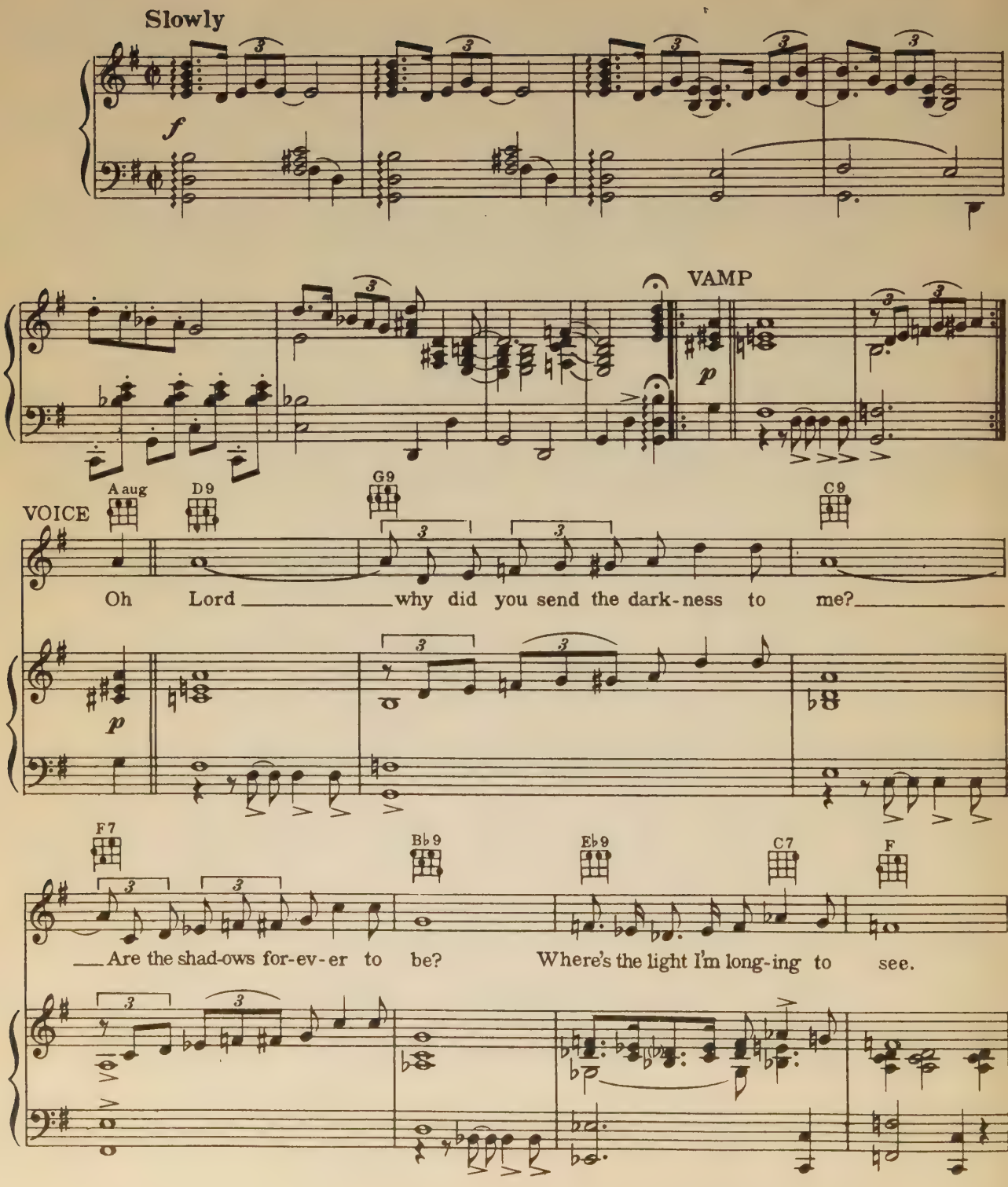

brillante
and Ro - man-tic Blues
Once I heard a lov-er
ff brillante
When work was o-ver
Strum a Cre-ole croon
to his
r. h.
mf
mp
pp
lov - ey dov - ey
un-der-neath a Dix-ie
Moon I heard her say just so
Slowly
"Chan tez les Bas"
Shaun-ta lay Bah
That means in Cre-ole
Sing 'em low,
pp tenderly


I like that pret-ty word "Chan-tez les Bas."
Shaun-tay lay Bah.
She liked her blues played
sweet-ly and slow
Oh
Chan-tez les Bas-
I can't for-get that
ser-e - nade
And if you'll list-en to me
just a - while
I'll try to sing for you just what he said-


With ecstacy Blues
Oh in de Morn-in' ba-by jes' fore day_ in de morn-in'__ jes' fore day_
mf
f
mp
p
Oh in de morn-in' jes' fore day_ New Or - leans_ Hey! Hey!
Oh in de morn-in' ba - by jes' fore day Oh in de morn-in'__
jes' fore day_ Oh in de morn-in' ba - by jes' fore day_
I'll come to get you and take you a - way_ Far, far a - way Chan-tez les Bas.
rall.

WILLOW, WEEP FOR ME

Words and Music by
ANN RONELL



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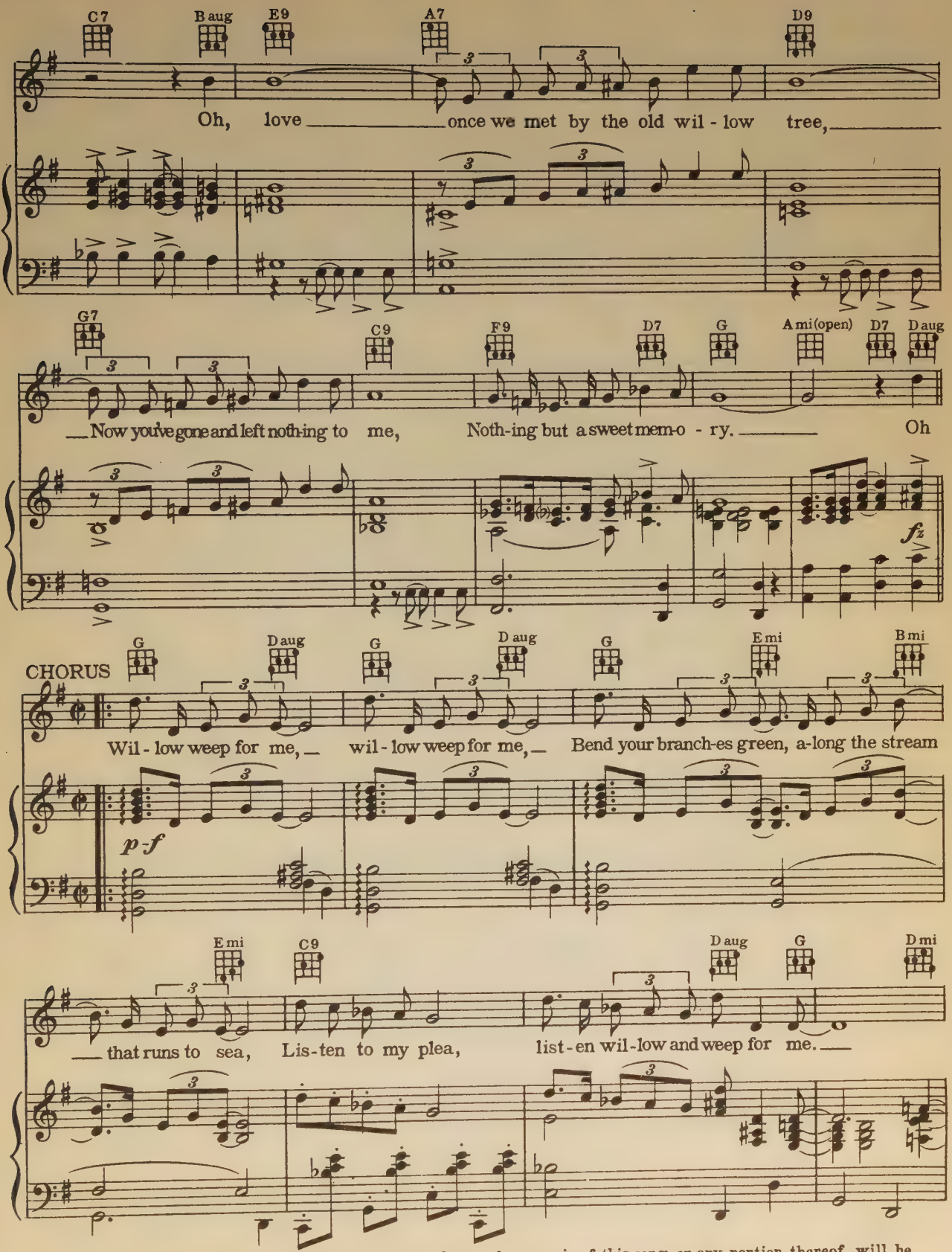

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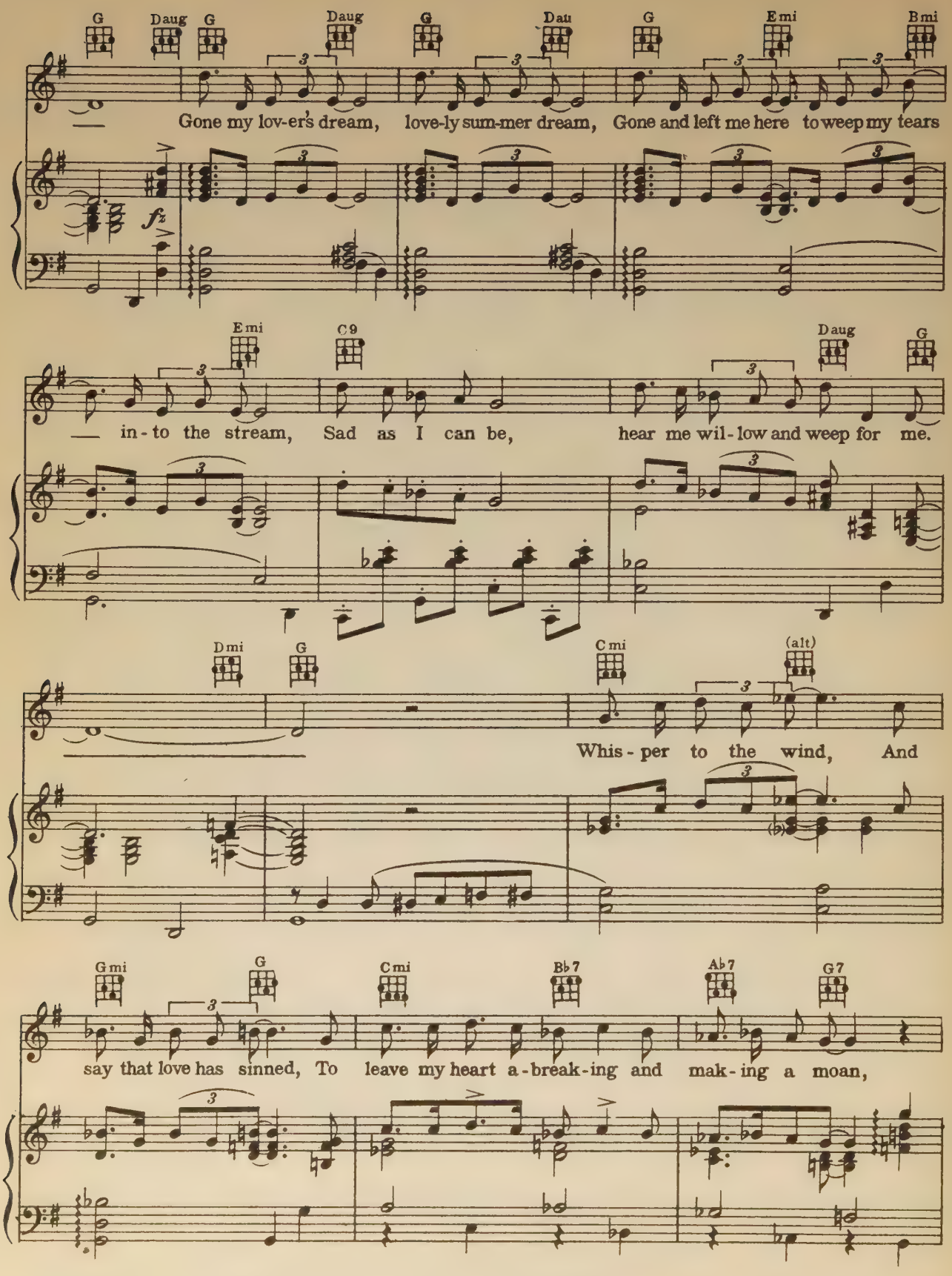
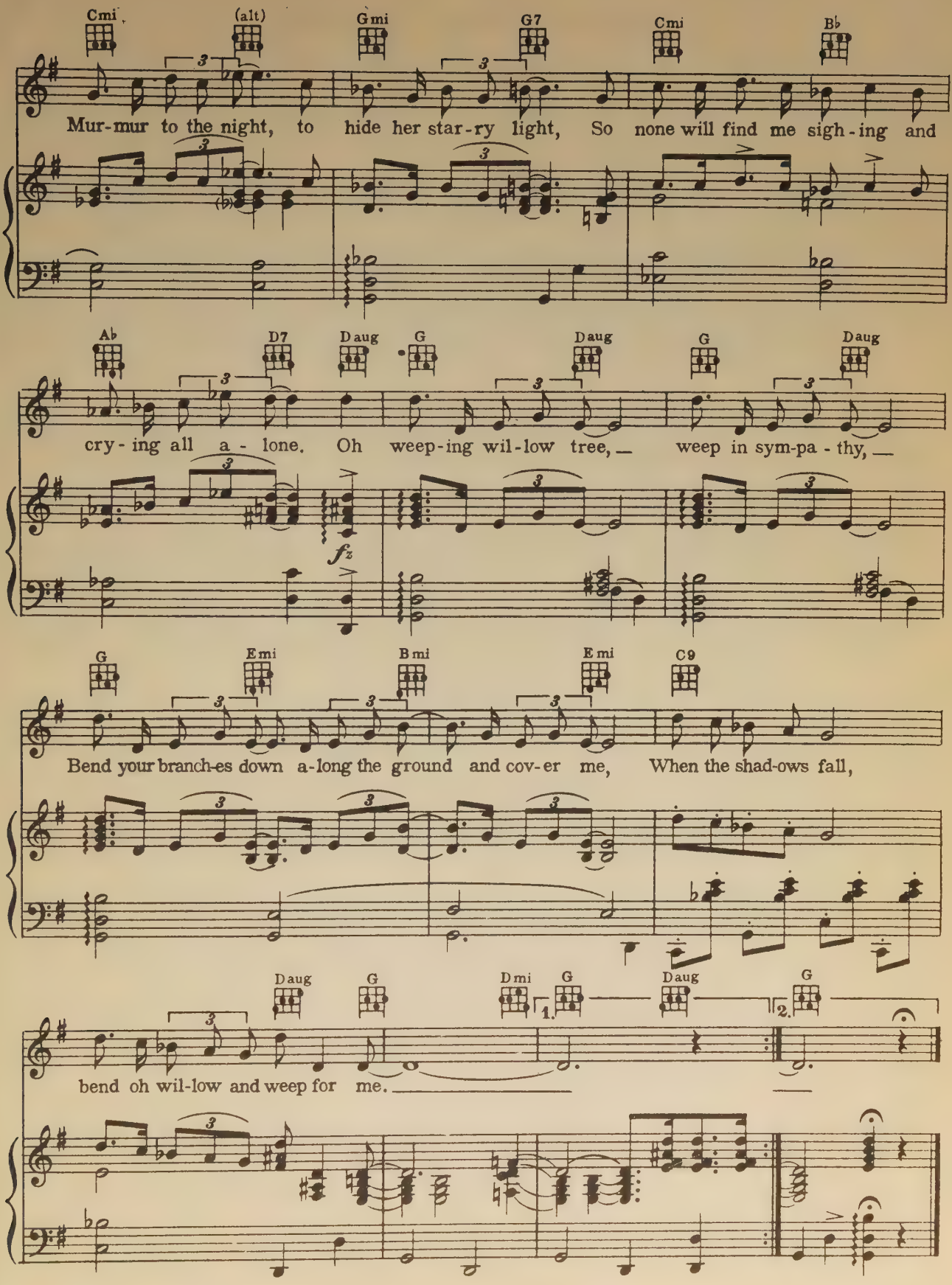
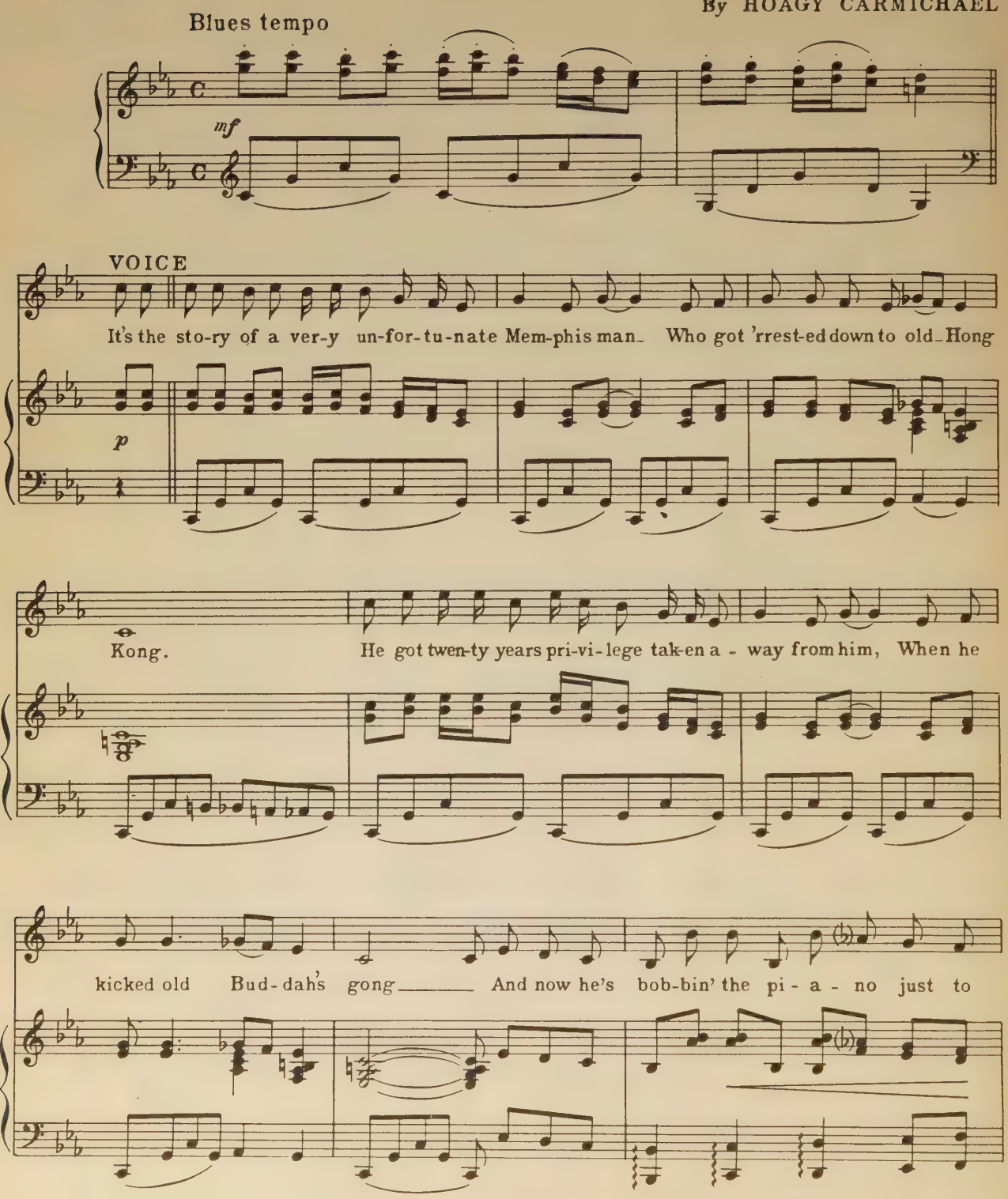

G Daug G Daug G Dau G Emi Bmi
Gone my lov-er's dream, love-ly sum-mer dream, Gone and left me here to weep my tears
fz
Emi C9 Daug G
— in-to the stream, Sad as I can be, hear me wil-low and weep for me.
Dmi G Cmi (alt)
Whis-per to the wind, And
Gmi G Cmi Bb7 Ab7 G7
say that love has sinned, To leave my heart a-break-ing and mak-ing a moan,


Cmi
(alt)
Gmi
G7
Cmi
B♭
Mur-mur to the night, to hide her star-ry light, So none will find me sigh-ing and
A♭
D7
Daug
G
Daug
G
Daug
cry-ing all a-lone. Oh weep-ing wil-low tree, weep in sym-pa-thy,
fz
G
Emi
Bmi
Emi
C9
Bend your branch-es down a-long the ground and cov-er me, When the shad-ows fall,
Daug
G
Dmi
G
Daug
G
1.
2.
bend oh wil-low and weep for me.

HONG KONG BLUES

By HOAGY CARMICHAEL


Blues tempo
mf
VOICE
It's the sto-ry of a ver-y un-for-tu-nate Mem-phis man_ Who got 'rrest-ed down to old_Hong
p
Kong.
He got twen-ty years pri-vi-lege tak-en a - way from him, When he
kicked old Bud-dah's gong_____ And now he's bob-bin' the pi - a - no just to

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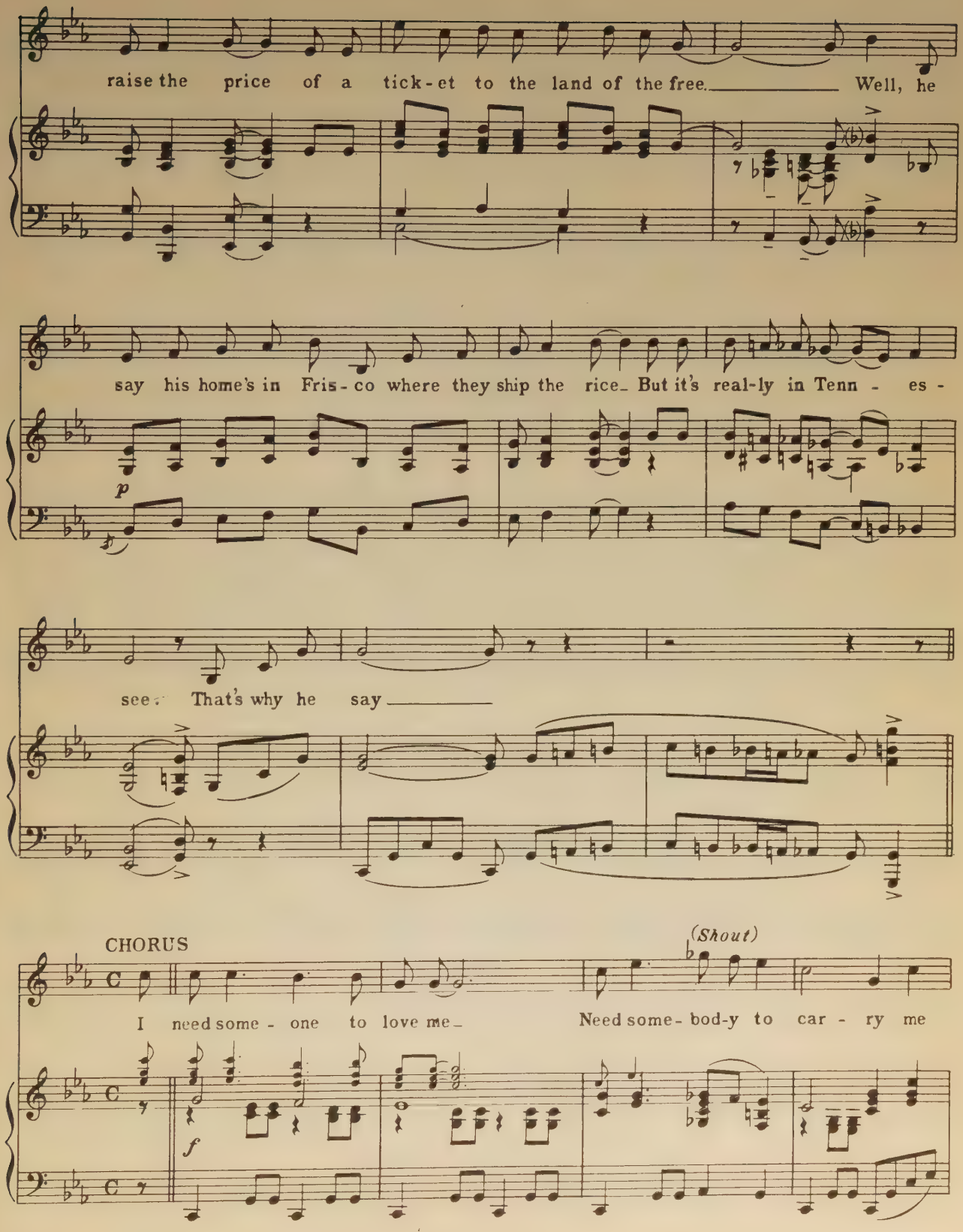
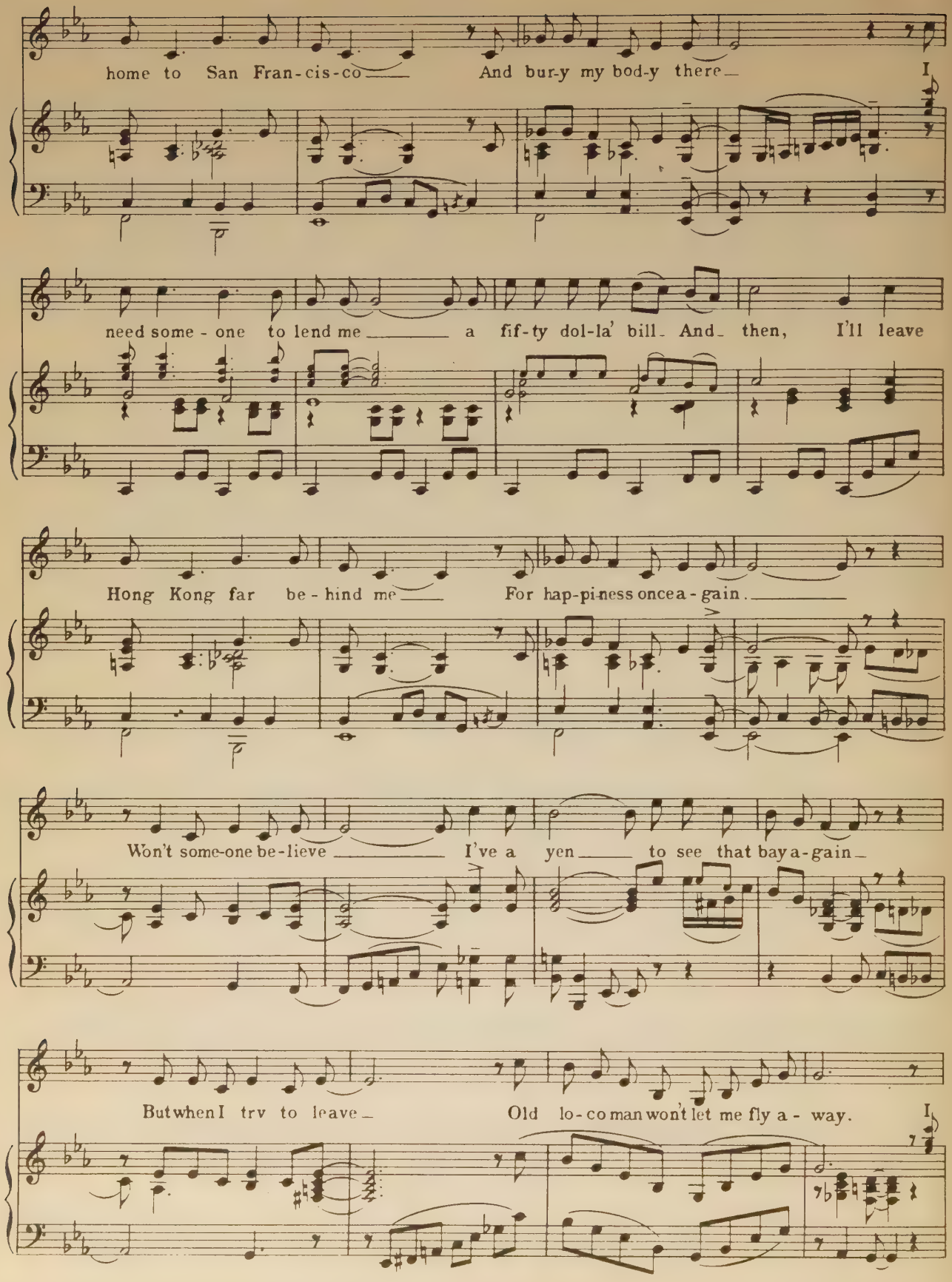
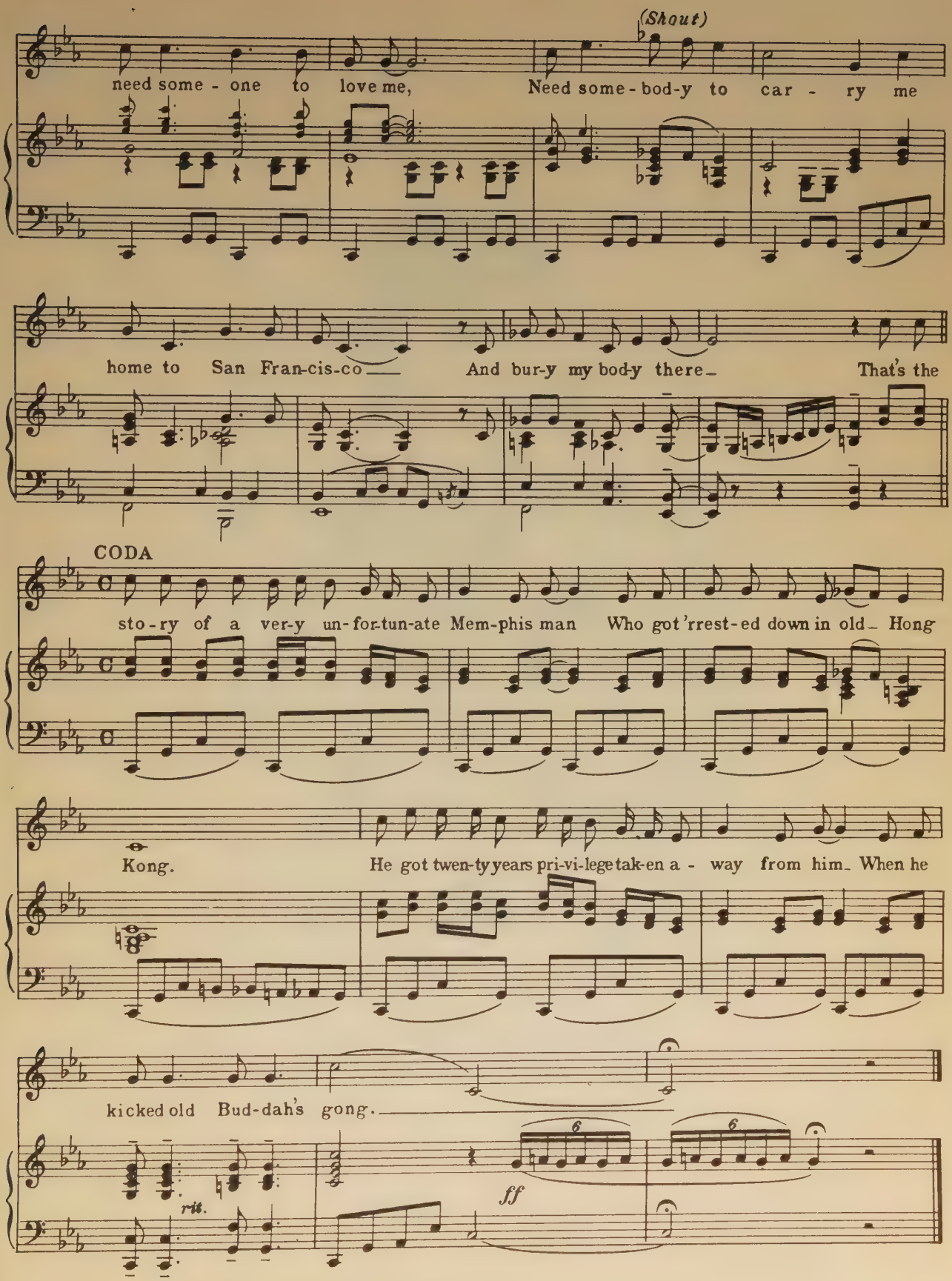

raise the price of a tick-et to the land of the free. Well, he
say his home's in Fris-co where they ship the rice. But it's real-ly in Tenn - es -
p
see. That's why he say
CHORUS
(Shout)
I need some - one to love me. Need some-bod-y to car - ry me
f


home to San Fran-cis-co And bur-y my bod-y there I
need some-one to lend me a fif-ty dol-la' bill. And then, I'll leave
Hong Kong far be-hind me For hap-pi-ness once a-gain.
Won't some-one be-lieve I've a yen to see that bay a-gain.
But when I try to leave Old lo-co man won't let me fly a-way. I


(Shout)
need some - one to love me, Need some - bod-y to car - ry me
home to San Fran-cis-co And bur-y my bod-y there That's the
CODA
sto - ry of a ver-y un-for-tun-ate Mem-phis man Who got 'rrest-ed down in old Hong
Kong. He got twen-ty years pri-vi-lege tak-en a - way from him When he
kicked old Bud-dah's gong.
rit.
ff

GEORGE GERSHWIN

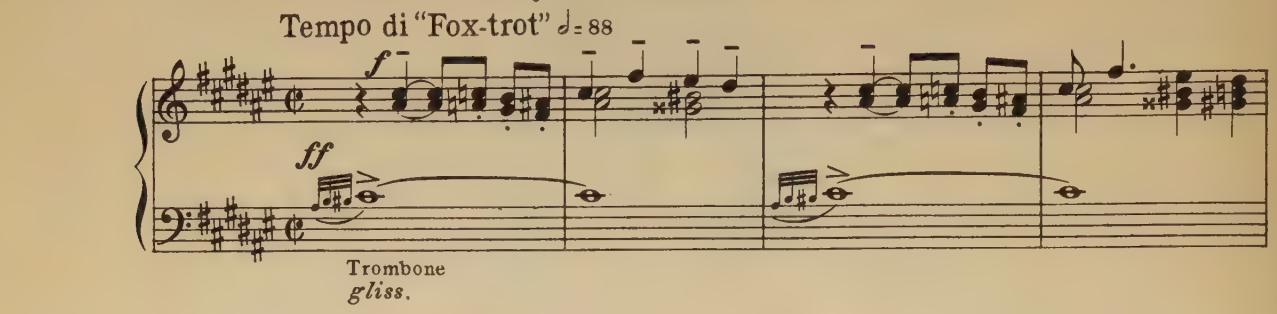
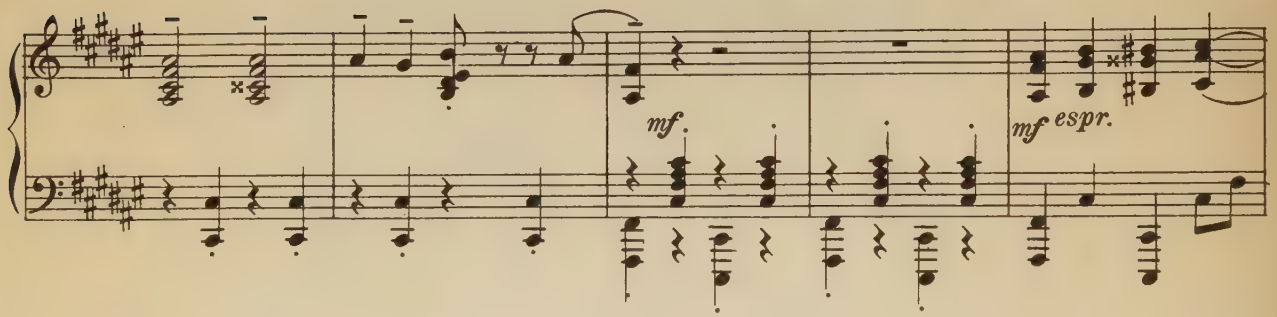
LARGER FORMS

KRAZY KAT BALLET
(EXCERPT)

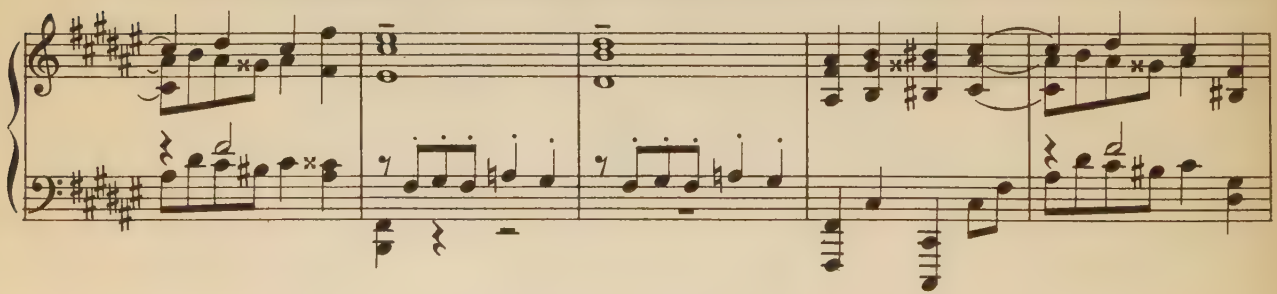
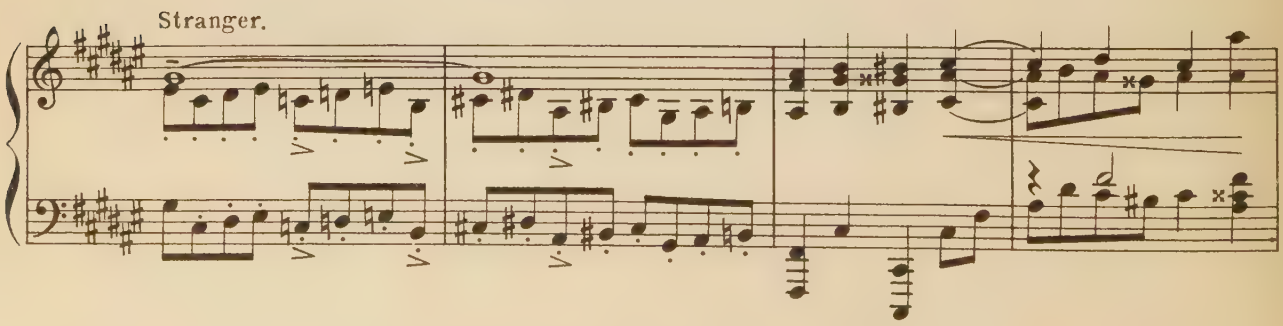
Music by
JOHN ALDEN CARPENTER

Scenario by
GEORGE HERRIMAN

An extraordinary reaction ensues —



as Krazy loses himself in the "Kat-nip Blues," urged always to greater frenzy by the Mysterious



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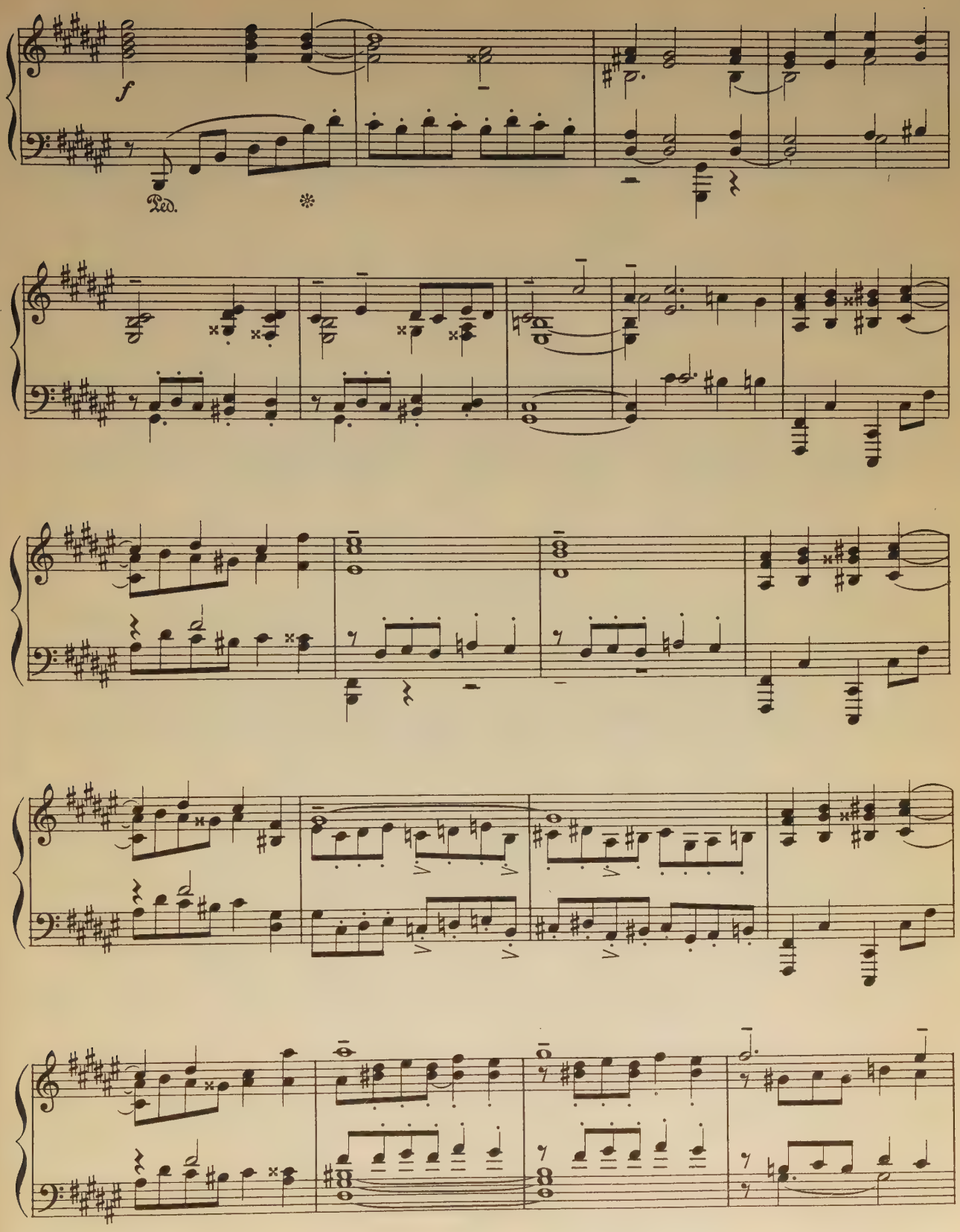
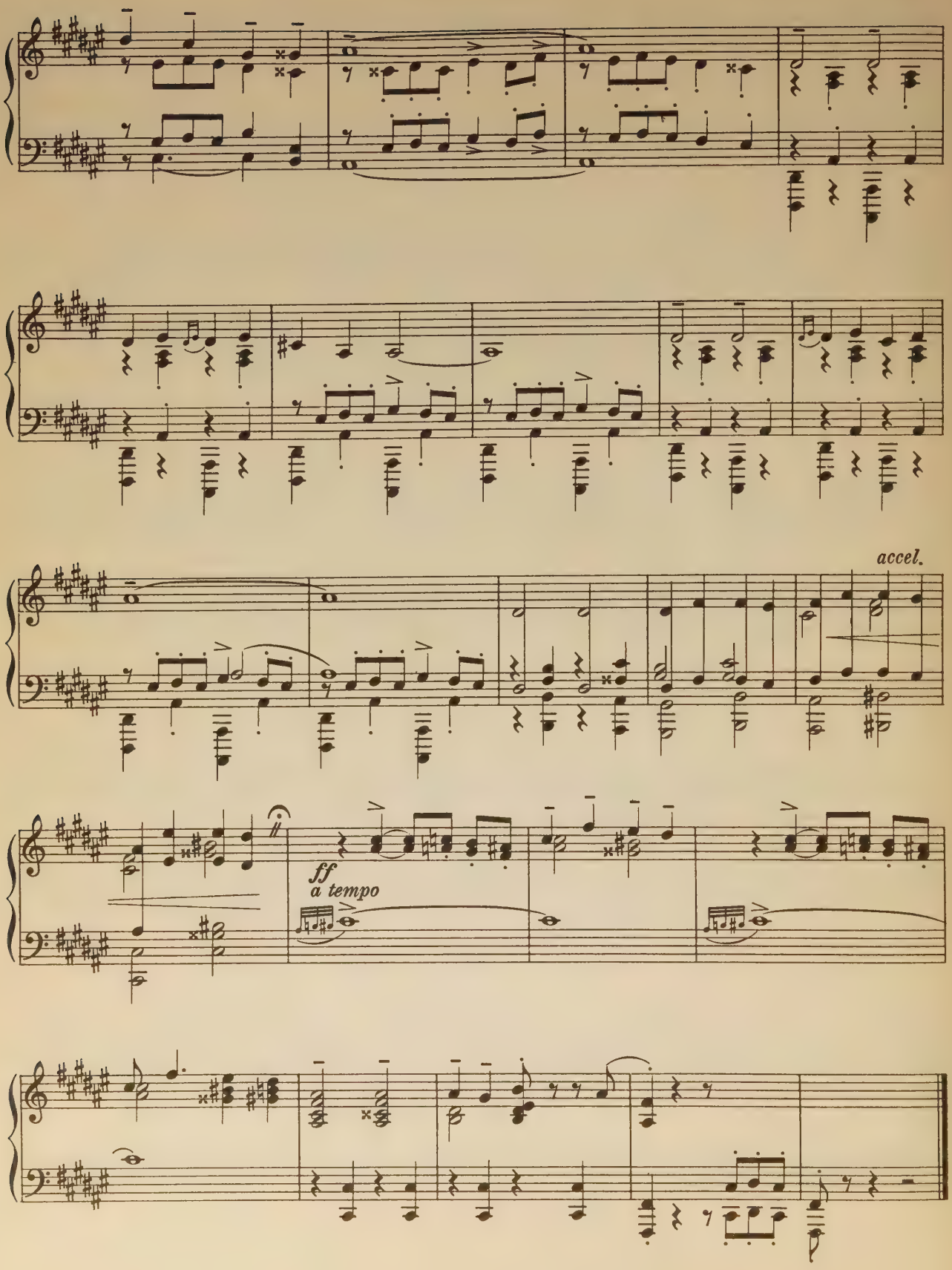
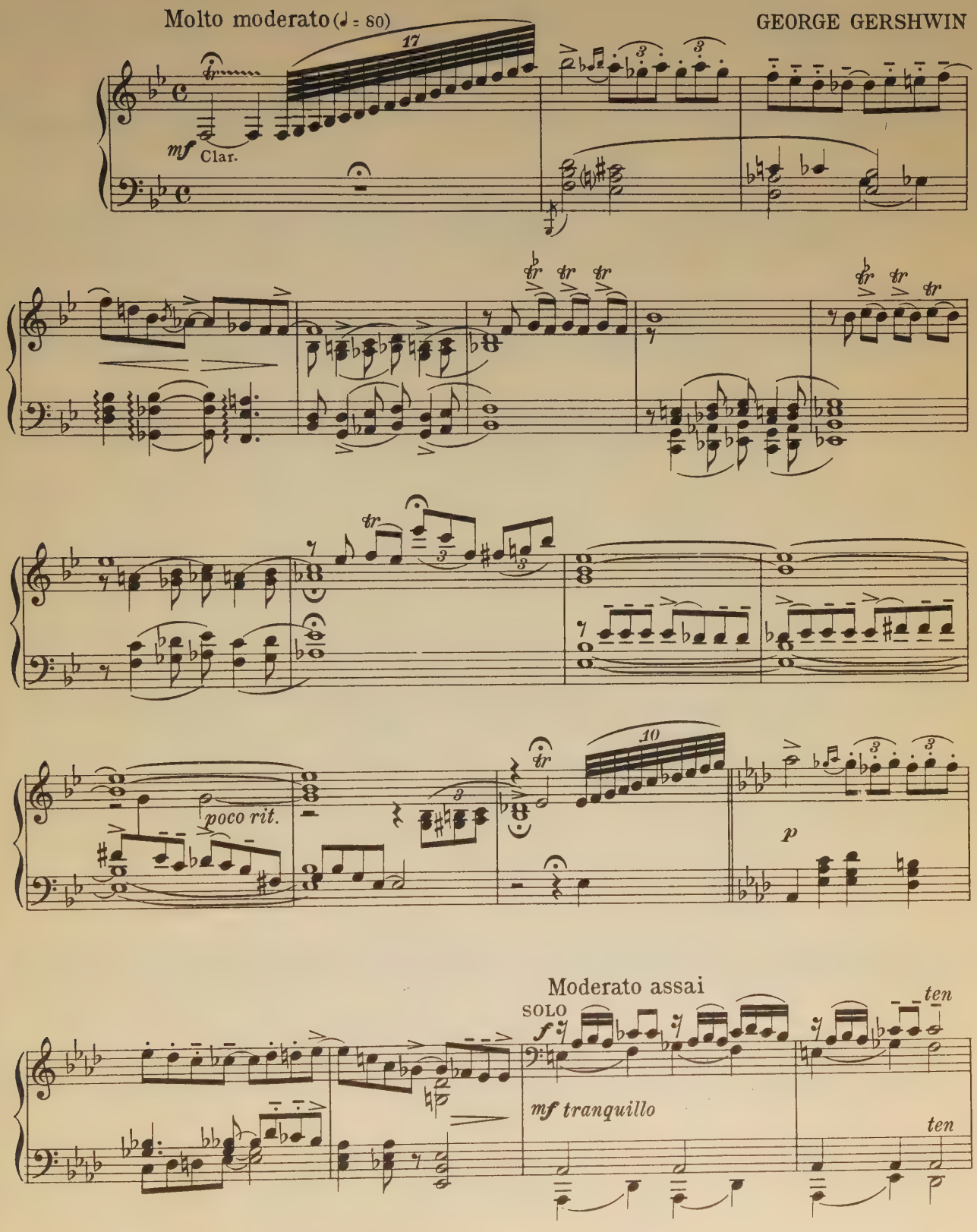

f
Ped.


accel.
ff
a tempo

RHAPSODY IN BLUE
(EXCERPT)



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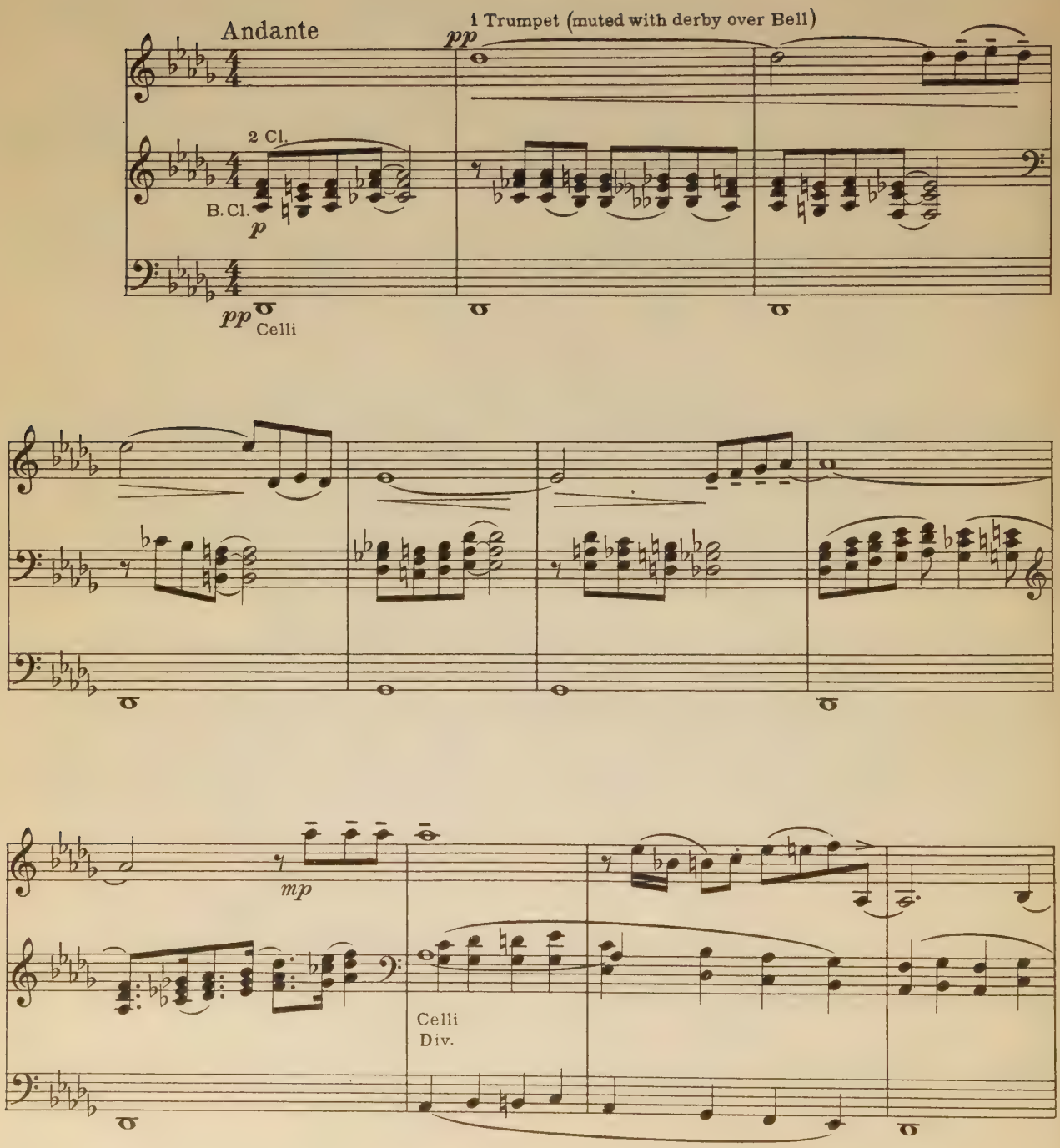
CONCERTO IN F
(EXCERPT)

GEORGE GERSHWIN



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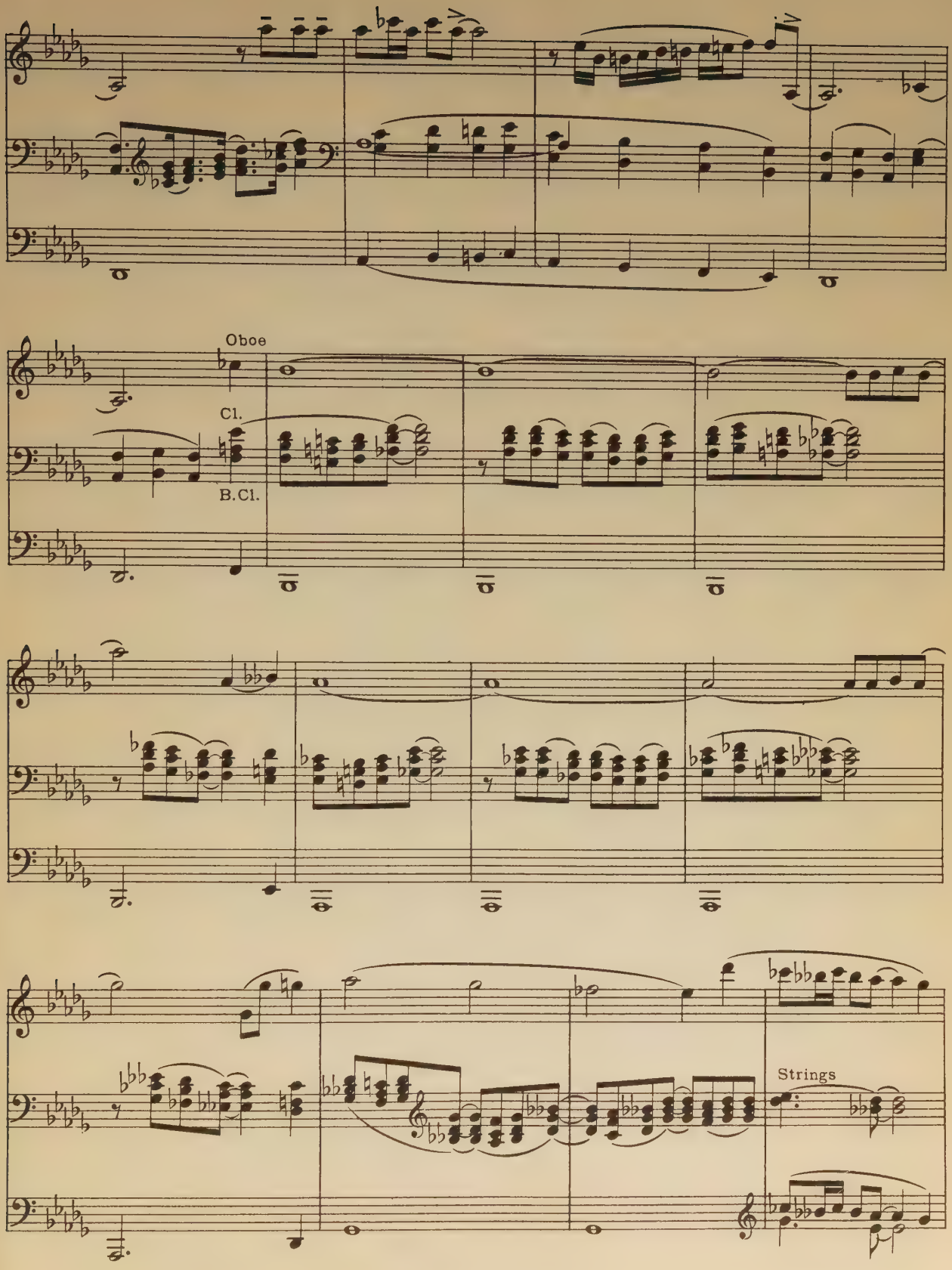
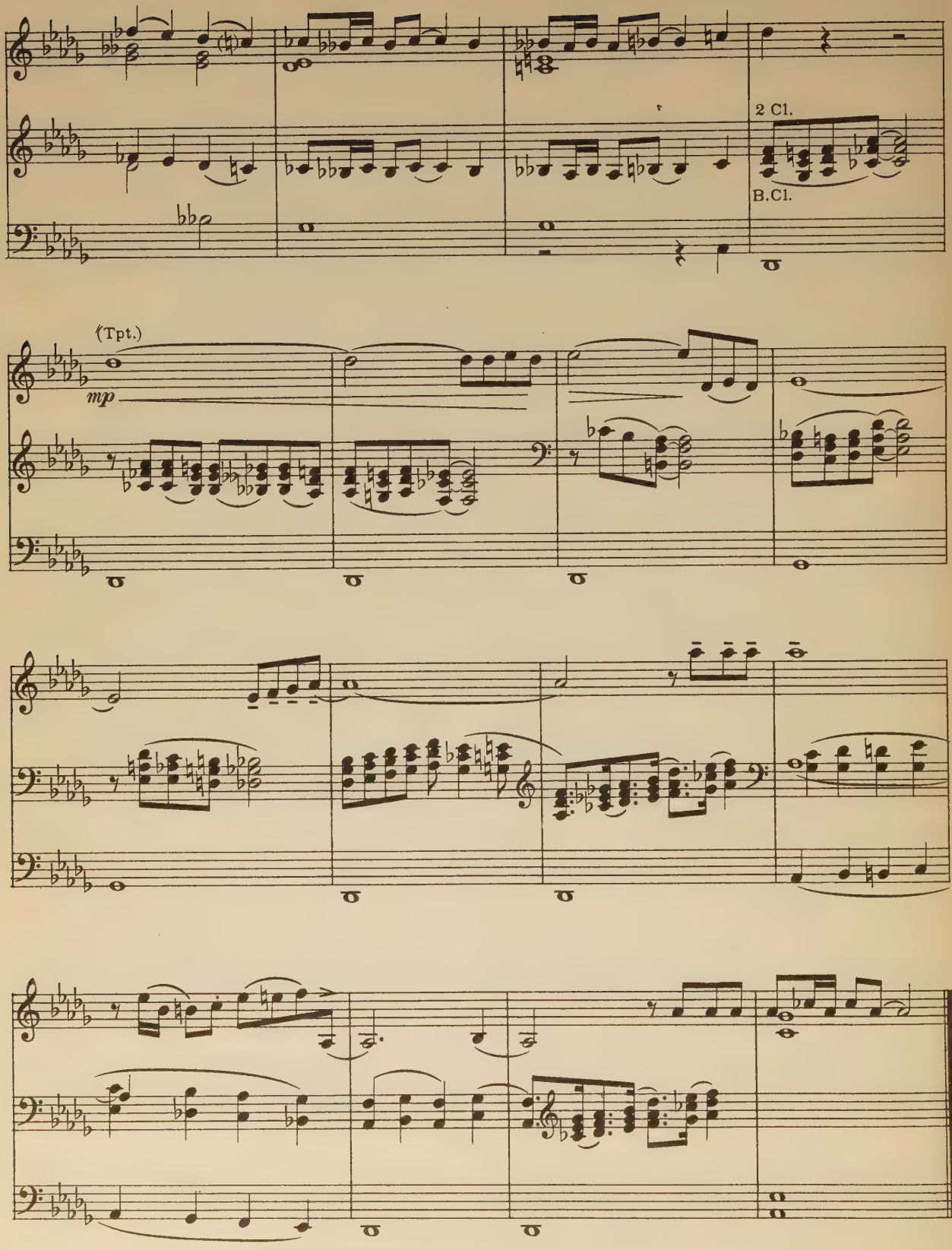

Oboe
Cl.
B.Cl.
Strings


2 Cl.
B.Cl.
(Tpt.)
mp

NOTES
TO THE COLLECTION

I. *THE BACKGROUND*

The inclusion of this variegated list of Afro-American folk-songs, all drawn from the memory of W. C. Handy, is intended to introduce the musical family whence sprang the blues; pointing out some, and leaving it to the reader to discover others, of the relationships of this and that type to the subject of this book. For books referred to herein, see Bibliography, p. 254.

Train's A-Comin'
(*page 40*)

One of the many Gospel-Train spirituals, such as were early adopted as minstrel songs. Similar words are found in Odum and Johnson, page 113 (without music), and (with a different air) in Scarborough, page 253. It is here given as it was sung in the '80s by the congregation of the colored Baptist church of Florence, Alabama, led by the Reverend Cordie White—one of the old ecstatic school who

Do believe without a doubt
Dat Christians got a right to shout.

The tempo should be rapid, the attack enthusiastic, and the relentless latent tom-tom pulse which brings it between these covers should not —if it can—be overlooked.

Let Us Cheer the Weary Traveler
(*page 41*)

A familiar version of this spiritual is to be found among the arrangements of H. T. Burleigh; in the *Book of American Negro Spirituals;* and in an adaptation in Coleridge-Taylor's *Twenty-Four Negro Melodies;* as given here it is believed to be new to print. W. C. Handy (who has published an arrangement as a church anthem) heard it thus in many parts of the South; in its most striking presentation, by a chorus of two hundred voices at the A. and M. College (now Institute) in Huntsville, Alabama. The remarkable variation in this version lies first in the somber minors at the close of an otherwise innocent and conventional churchly introduction; second, in the weird and primitive effect, in the refrain, of the successive flat seventh and minor third, the latter of which would suggest (under the theory stated at p. 14) that it was felt not *as* the third, but as the seventh on the subdominant.

Somebody's Wrong About Dis Bible
(*page 42*)

To other airs and with more verses, this spiritual was known over a wide range. To this melody of only two notes it was sung daily, for years, by the blind beggar-woman on the corner of Beale and Third Streets, Memphis. Handy heard it thus sung by no one else, and it is doubtful if one in a thousand of those who passed realized that he heard something complete as to form, and very nearly unique in its tonal economy. The latter characteristic, along with the instinctive syncopation, accounts for the song's presence here. For the perfect example among the spirituals of graceful syncopation with deep feeling, see *Lonesome Valley,* the air of which appears in *Slave Songs of the United States* and, with fascinatingly different piano accompaniments, in Hugo Frey's and R. Emmett Kennedy's collections. Another extraordinary example, in march time, is *Shine Like a Morning Star,* which is to be found only in Handy's own published arrangement.

Joe Jacobs
(*page 42*)
Goin' to See My Sarah
(*page 43*)

These are work songs. The grunts mark the bringing down of the rhythmical pick or sledge.

Catch the worrying of the tonic third (in short, the blue notes) in the one, the strange intermediate cries in the other. *Goin' to See My Sarah* was sung in Henderson, Kentucky, at least as early as 1898. *Joe Jacobs*—based on some Birmingham tragedy—Handy first heard in 1892 at the Harrison Howard Pipe Works in that city. Compare its verbal variations, the "I said" and "I mean," with those in the *Dallas Blues* variant at page 13.

Sail Away, Ladies
Come On, Eph!
Juba
(*page 44*)

Three "pats," which illustrate a few of the more complicated rhythms of Negro dance-music. The *Juba* is the oldest of the three; fifty years ago it was beginning to die out, though Handy's uncles knew it. To each four-beat bar, there were four foot-pats or steps, and meanwhile, three pats with alternate hands on the sides of the legs, followed by a hand-clap on the fourth beat; there was thus no syncopation. Like other pats, it might be done in large companies, perhaps with one solo performer in the midst, to be replaced when exhausted. Thomas Talley (in *Negro Folk Rhymes, Wise and Otherwise*) gives additional verses and states that between them some special caper would be cut; it is easy to imagine the crowd egging on the soloist to the lines given:

Juba jump an' Juba sing,
Juba *cut dat pigeon's wing!*

Juba kick off Juba's shoe,
Juba *dance dat Jubal Jew!*

Juba whirl dat foot about,
Juba *blow dat candle out!*

Juba circle, raise de latch,
Juba *do dat Long Dog Scratch!*

A variant of the air may be found on page 98 of Scarborough.

In striking contrast to this breathless staccato is the charming *Sail Away, Ladies,* to which traditionally the foot is patted on each accented, the hands clapped on each unaccented, beat. "De sisters" would seem to denote the prudes —"de *ole* sisters." Talley has it:

Never min' what de white folks say,
May de Mighty bless you—sail away!

and adds a verse:

Never min' what yo' daddy say,
Shake yo' little foot an' fly away,
Never min' if yo' mammy say
"De devil'll git you"—sail away!

The song was traditional in Florence, where there was yet another and quite unrelated verse:

Sally's got a meat-skin laid away,
Sally's got a meat-skin laid away,
Sally's got a meat-skin laid away,
To grease her wooden leg every day.

Old fiddlers around Kentucky would sing it:

Can't get a letter f'om down de road.

And in Henderson, for one place, it was "Di-de-o"; Mrs. Handy remembers it:

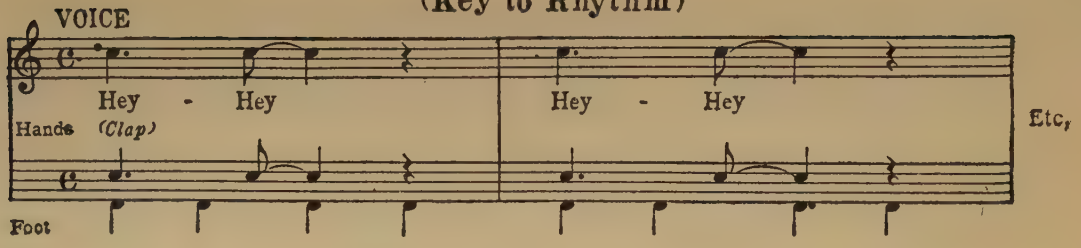
My coat collar, Di-de-o
Makes me holler, Di-de-o
My coat-tail, Di-de-o,
Makes me sail, Di-de-o.

(Refrain:)
O Di-di-de-o
O Di-di-de-o
O Di-di-de-o
O Di-di-de-o

Come On, Eph! was known all over the South, before it was taken up by the minstrel shows. Here alternate hands pat the thighs only, a shuffle takes the place of the foot-pat, and the Fs are highly explosive, with the voice and breath becoming rhythm instruments in themselves.

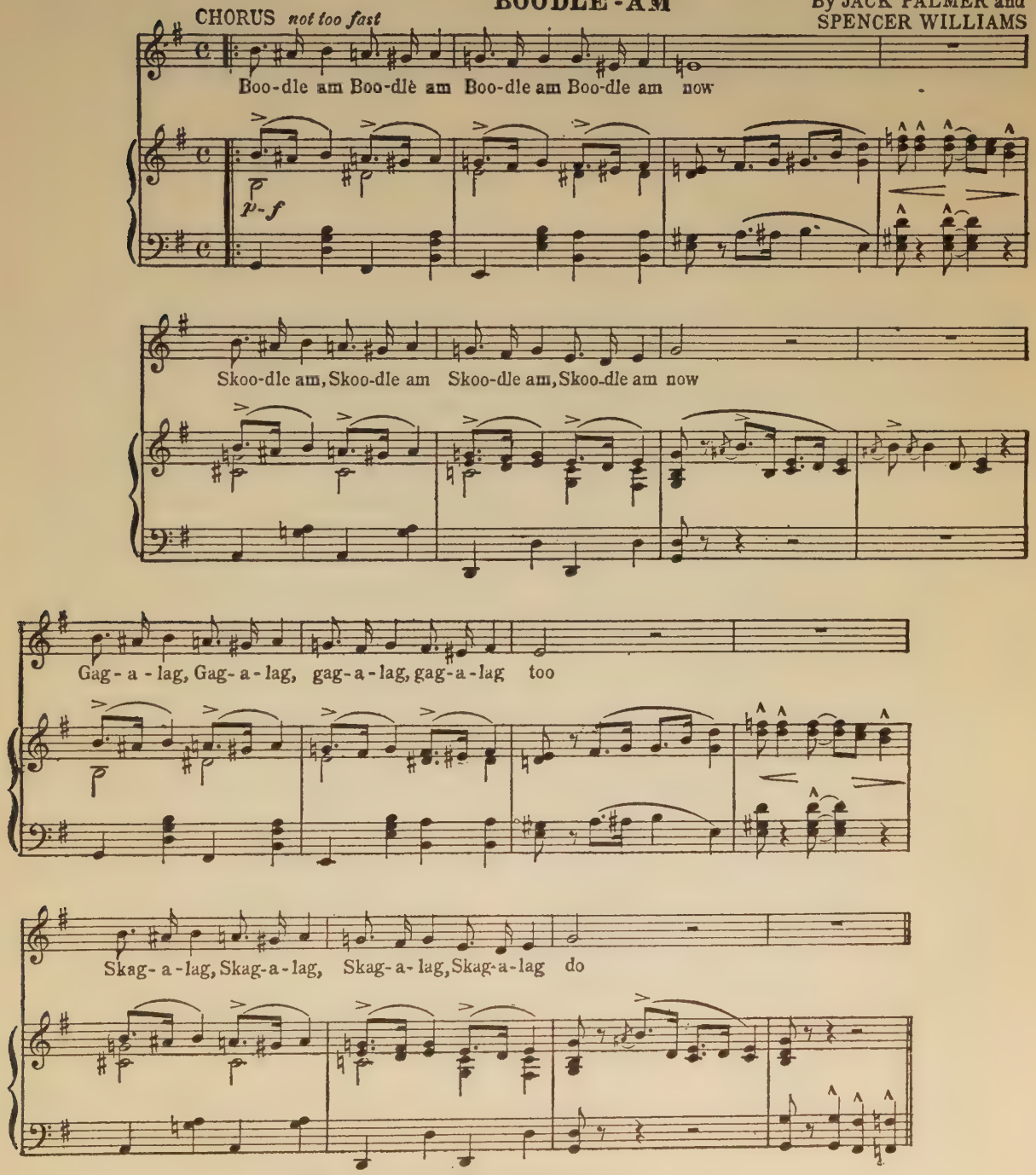
These are a few examples of a class of which the Charleston pat was the youngest representative. The example on the facing page, part of a 1926 Broadway song, shows the family resemblances:

(Key to Rhythm)



BOODLE-AM

By JACK PALMER and SPENCER WILLIAMS


CHORUS not too fast
Boo-dle am Boo-dle am Boo-dle am Boo-dle am now
p-f
Skoo-dle am, Skoo-dle am Skoo-dle am, Skoo-dle am now
Gag-a-lag, Gag-a-lag, gag-a-lag, gag-a-lag too
Skag-a-lag, Skag-a-lag, Skag-a-lag, Skag-a-lag do

Copyright 1926 by Handy Bros. Music Co., Inc.

While, as has been pointed out, the Charleston pat is merely a truncated *habañera* (*tangana*), this rhythm is not foreign to the religious side —see the Gullah songs *Same Train* and *Aye Lawd Don't Leabe Me* in the St. Helena Island collection, and J. Rosamund Johnson's arrangement of *All God's Chillun Got Wings.*

The pats have, perhaps, more to do with the eight- and sixteen-bar intermezzos in the blues songs than with the blues proper. Look, for example, at *Jogo* (page 67). For a remarkable discussion of the very complicated theory of African rhythms in general, see the Ballanta treatise.

East St. Louis
(*page 44*)

An over-and-over with the blue spirit and the blue note—though of only eight bars. It was sung in Kentucky as early as, perhaps earlier than, the first decade of this century. Kentucky was probably its origin. Vagrants from those parts would make for St. Louis when the itch to travel set in; East St. Louis, Illinois, was the last stop to which it was safe to ride the rods.

Handy has published a "popular" version of this song in sheet music, and Duke Ellington has added to the town's fame, and his own, with a remarkable piece of jazz called *East St. Louis Toodle-oo.*

A Typical Stomp
(*page 45*)

In other words, a typical modern Negro dance-tune. Some years ago it would have been called a "rag." The name is applied also to home dancing parties, and very likely was coined by a family downstairs. This specimen is perhaps not more than thirty-five years old; it sprang up from nowhere apparent and spread about Tennessee.

Careless Love
(*page 46*)

An old and very widely known lament, called also *Kelly's Love,* under which title a version (without music) appears in Odum and Johnson, page 194. So far as is known, first published with its music in the original edition of this book. *Careless Love,* despite loose references to it in some books, is obviously not a blues. It was, however, married to the blues in Handy's *Loveless Love* (page 129), whose introductory section is pure blues—and pure Handy. He himself had heard and played the original tune of *Careless Love* as early as 1892, in Bessemer, Alabama.

Ever After On
(*page 49*)

Vesta and Mattie's Blues
(*page 51*)

Casting (especially the *Vesta*) a red light on the blues. *Ever After* was known over a wide area, and variants of the words are found at pages 185 and 194 of Odum and Johnson. Especially after its sprightly beginning, its dismal laments are uncharacteristic, lacking the saving humor of the blues. *Vesta and Mattie,* a blues of the bridged-over type referred to on pp. 12-13, was current in Memphis, and its air is typical of the crudity of the primitive blues. "Long-line skinner" is somewhat obscure. It is said to have designated a driver of teams of four or more mules, and the term was thus used by circus people; there are intimations that it may also have something to do with the operators of skin-games—also not unknown to the circuses.

Got No Mo' Home Dan a Dog
(*page 52*)

Friendless Blues
(*page 53*)

These furnish in short compass the transition between the folk-blues and their direct modern descendant. The first strain with its words is at least fifty years old, and written as it was sung around 1890 by the Negro quartet in Florence—choral singing of the blues in later days was rare, but this was not only long before the name was coined, but be-

fore the type became common. In spirit it is a guitar song, but the quartet was often hard up for material. It was known less widely than the folk-song *Joe Turner*, but Handy played it with mandolin and guitar trios as far north as Evansville, Indiana.

The three succeeding versions represent the way such songs have been adapted, since they acquired the status of dance-music, to the prevailing fashions: Hearts and Flowers, the tango, the Charleston; winding up with an entirely new Handy blues chorus, and new words. And this brings us to the second subject: the modern development of the blues.

II. *THE BLUES*

A note on blues at the piano: (1) they should be played slowly; (2) but in meticulous time; (3) for a while at least, the white man should play them exactly as written—that his subsequent embellishments (if any) may be in character; (4) do not skip to the chorus, for what precedes it may be the best part.

As to the singing of the blues, it would seem necessary, first, to be a colored contralto—except for the fact that Marion Harris was white. The only practical advice is to listen to what used to be known as "race records" (by Bessie and Clara Smith, Ma Rainey, Lonnie Johnson, Victoria Spivey, Alberta Hunter, etc.), for this craft is *sui generis*, and incommunicable by written words. In discussion of the folk-blues as verse, it has been remarked, in substance, that their striking feature is their employment of humor for the expression of misery. Any impression from this statement, however, that these are brave efforts of optimism, will be corrected for such as may hear with what desolate sadness they are invested by their high priestesses, who do not sing, but "*suffer*" the blues.

In this section we pass from the archaic or folk-blues to those written for publication, but still in the classical form. In most cases, the writers, for the sake of variety and contrast, have added one or more strains in some other, related style; nevertheless, what we have here, in a musicians' stock phrase, is "really the blues." Some use a blues as introduction or "verse" but depart from type in the chorus; some reverse the process; some divide a blues introduction from a blues chorus by an eight- or sixteen-bar "pat" intermezzo. The earmarks of the genuine blues have already been discussed at length; they are numerous. For general purposes, however, it is sufficient to say that in the blues twelve (instead of the normal eight or sixteen) bars constitute a unit which could stand alone, so that a blues introduction or chorus will contain twelve, twenty-four, or rarely thirty-six bars instead of the eight, sixteen, or thirty-two which make up the typical popular tune.

Memphis
(*page 60*)

This is the first (1912) published version of this first written blues, interlined with some of the many frivolous or traditional verses that were sung to its tune in the 1909 campaign. The entire first strain of the music was omitted in Bennett's vocal edition of 1913.

To Handy himself, *Memphis*—with its thrilling final section—is his favorite as well as his first blues.

Dallas
(*page 64*)

Although Handy's *Memphis* was constantly played by the Handy band from the time of the 1909 election campaign, it was not published until September 28, 1912. Just two days before that, Hart A. Wand, white, of Oklahoma City, registered the *Dallas Blues* at the Copyright Office, depositing two copies of the third edition, with a statement that its first publication had been on September 6. The copy in my possession—marked "9th edition"—is arranged for piano without words. It has ten-bar strains instead of the classical twelve, the tune having been telescoped at the sacrifice of the usual breaks, or "jazz." This primitive edition, which has no introductory passage, bears the imprint of "Wand Publishing Co." of Oklahoma City and the credit line "arranged by M. Annabel

Robbins," but it does not name any composer. Wand himself, however, has received that credit in later editions.

Lomax's book, *Negro Folk Songs as Sung by Leadbelly*, gives a song commencing "Got de Fort Worth Blues and de Dallis heart disease," which Lomax says was sung by Leadbelly (Huddie Ledbetter) and Blind Lemon Jefferson while the former lived in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. His residence there, however, is given as from 1901 to 1918, which is too long a period to prove anything. Ledbetter's tune, which Lomax has transcribed in a thirteen-bar strain, has the *Dallas* rhythm structure, but diverges widely from the *Dallas* melody. *Dallas Blues* is presented here in its modern version. See also the variant at page 13.

Jogo

(*page 67*)

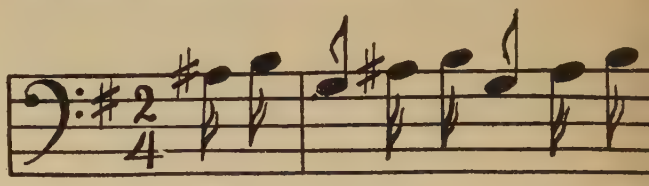
Originally known as *The Memphis Itch*, and Handy's first after *Memphis Blues*. There are certain Afro-American code words, and Negroes in theatrical and minstrel circles, having heard and liked *Mr. Crump* without knowing its composer, had been asking each other whether the latter was Jogo, *i.e.*, Negro. His second title broadcast the reply. This instrumental piece later furnished the famous chorus of *St. Louis Blues*, but its fascinating pat intermezzo had no reincarnation. The last section of *Jogo* is from a folk-tune:

Lawdy, Lawdy
Lawdy, Lawdy
Lawdy, Lawdy, Lawd!
I'll see you when yo' troubles all 'll be like mine!

St. Louis

(*page 71*)

The most widely known and imitated blues ever written. The chorus, in whatever hurly-burly of clashing sounds and rhythms it may be heard today or in the future, traces back to Brother Lazarus Gardner (Presiding Elder, Florence District, Northern Alabama Conference, African M.E. Church), taking up the collection on visitations as the Bishop's representative to the Florence church in the early '90s. The congregation came up to the plate, not it to them, and the Presiding Elder, a mighty exhorter, was rendered no less efficient by his substantial interest in the offering. He called them up in a singsong which Handy mentally translated into the following three-note theme:



The final strain of *St. Louis* is an ingenious ringing of the changes on this theme.

In the introductory section of *St. Louis* ("I hate to see . . ."), one of the devices of the old-style pianists may be imitated by striking in the second bar, *with* the B-flat as written, B-*natural*, but releasing the latter key before the former. This trick, while it was most characteristic of both the piano- and guitar-players and the counterpart of the vocal slur of the tonic third already discussed, has not been carried into the printed blues. Grace notes may be inserted almost anywhere, but this discord belongs with the descending sequence in which we find it here. The intermezzo in *tangana* rhythm departs from the twelve-bar structure, and so is not strictly blues—it deviates also in its prevailing minor—but what comes before and after is kept in mind throughout. Note, in particular, the descent of the left hand to the subdominant in its second bar; it was rejected, presumably as harsh, by Chiaffarelli on transcribing this melody into his "Jazz Symphony," but it was written in as typical. Typical also, and used as such, is the C-E-G-A sequence and chord, in bar 5 of the first blues.

The words of *St. Louis* are a sufficiently remarkable piece of work—a mosaic of characteristic Negro expressions from beginning to end. And the title is in memory of two weeks' starvation between the episode of Handy's quartet at the Columbian Exposition and his

finding something else to do. As this book goes to press, Mayor Darst of St. Louis is leading a campaign to erect a Handy memorial building near the spot where, fifty-six years ago, the composer slept on the cobblestones beneath the Eads Bridge.

Mosaic though it be, and mingling the trivial with the profound, in the *St. Louis* lyric it is a real woman who seems to speak, commencing with laments and recriminations, then passing from her loss into contemplation of what she has lost, losing herself in this contemplation, and closing her little Song of Solomon (I say "closing," because the last three choruses are no more than patter) on her deepest note, "I'll love ma baby till de day Ah die." It may be far-fetched to recall Horace, closing the lofty musings of *Integer Vitae* with his pledge of love to a laughing girl, and yet whenever I hear "I'll love ma baby" I think of "*Lalagen amabo.*"

Yellow Dog
(*page 75*)

For the history of *Yellow Dog*, see page 17. The first two of Handy's usual three strains are merged in this song (the second beginning with "All day the phone rings"), and all three are twelve-bar blues. As to the chorus—a long story on a postcard: "On the hog" means dead broke. "Vamp it" means to walk it, to make it on his vamps ("Clo's all wo', *feet on de groun'* "). The "Yellow Dog" is the Yazoo Delta Railroad.

Yellow Dog quickly sold over a million phonograph records, and is still recorded by jazz orchestras.

Long Lost
(*page 79*)

This early blues is the work of Handy's jazz fiddler Paul Wyer, the creator of the *Memphis* break. Wyer is now a successful band leader in Rio de Janeiro, where he is said to have gone because the Brazilian tradition of racial tolerance suited his independent spirit.

Florida
(*page 82*)

This piece contains two blues in a spirit widely different from the Handy airs; *Florida* is in the vein of the Joplin instrumental rags (see page 28). Its writer, now dead, came to Handy's band from Jacksonville after *Memphis Blues*, as saxophonist and clarinet-player, and he was among the first to shock musical hearers with *glissandi* on the saxophone.

Kansas City
(*page 86*)

A blues from the home of K. C. Jones, the brave engineer. The composer, Euday Bowman, was white, wrote the famous *Twelfth Street Rag*, and was perhaps the first man to record blues for automatic pianos. He died as the present edition of this book was about to go to press. *Kansas City* is presented here in revised form, with lyrics by Willard Robison, another white man, but one with an almost religious devotion to Negro song.

Hesitating
(*page 89*)

In many popular songs the chorus is the thing and the rest merely padding. But a modern blues is likely to be a composite of two or more blues, as a Strauss waltz is a composite of several waltzes (or the introduction, or the chorus, may be the genuine blues), and their relative position means nothing. The *first* blues in *Hesitating* is one of the most generally known of all modern examples, for it is to this tune that the unnumbered stanzas are sung to the refrain or catch-lines

My honey, *how* long, have I got to wait?
Oh, can I git you now, or must I hesitate?

At about the same time as this a *Hesitation Blues* or *Must I Hesitate?* was published by Smythe and Middleton of Louisville, which used this same melody in a slightly different

arrangement, the words of which may have started the ball rolling. Neither song was stolen from the other, but the basis of the version here given was played and sung to Handy by a wandering musician who said he had it from a hymn (yet unidentified), and suggested its use. No doubt he visited Louisville as well. As popularly sung, it is unusual as a blues with a refrain; any of the regular stanzas may be sung to it by eliminating the repetitious second line and crowding the first and third into four bars:

If de river was whiskey, an' I was a duck, I'd dive to de bottom an' I'd never come up—My honey
How long have I got to wait?
Oh, can I git you now, or must I hesitate?

But the following was probably made for this very tune:

Silk stockin's, an' ruffled drawers,
Got many a po' man wearin' overalls,—My honey, etc.

And see page 11.

The *chorus* of *Hesitating*, with its pursuit of treble by bass, was not suggested to Handy by any tune, but imitates the *style* of Seymour Abernathy, a blind Negro pianist, in his improvisations in Mulcahy's saloon in Memphis.

Joe Turner Blues
(*page 93*)

The original of the chorus is perhaps the prototype of all blues. The old tune (reproduced at page 12) was known all over the South; was so known before there was any widespread singing of the folk-blues; was sung, moreover, to a number of different sets of words in different localities, and, naturally, with some musical differences. It has already been suggested, therefore, that all the early blues may have been *Joe Turner*, sung to the best of the individual's memory (which might be bad) and to such words as came into his mind. In corroboration, it will be found on experimenting that the old *Joe Turner* and almost any other blues of an unsophisticated type may actually be played or sung together without any serious difficulties being encountered.

Pete Turney was governor of Tennessee from 1892 to 1896, and his brother Joe would come to Memphis to lead the periodical batch of convicts to the Nashville penitentiary, of which he was the "long chain man." It is the terror of the latter's name (mispronounced) that is witnessed to by the best-known version of this song (see Odum and Johnson, page 206, where Joe is supposed to have been a convict himself):

Dey tell me Joe Turner's come an' gone—*O, Lawdy!*
Tell me Joe Turner's come an' gone—*O, Lawdy!*
Got my man—an'—gone.

Come wid his fo'ty links of chain—*O, Lawdy!*
Come wid his fo'ty links of chain—*O, Lawdy!*
Got my man, an' gone.

Come like he never come befo'—*O, Lawdy!*

Miss Scarborough has a four-line version (page 265, *op. cit.*). Since Joe Turney's jurisdiction extended no farther, it is natural that this should not have been the version sung across the Ohio in Henderson, Kentucky, and there this tune was "Gwine down de river 'fo' long." Down in Texas, strangely, it was "Michigan water tastes like sherry wine"; in the Sea Island cotton section of Georgia it was "Gwine down dat long, lonesome road." Some would-be Ph.D. should be set to the useful labor of running down all the versions, and required to produce at least one for every Southern state.

Snakey
(*page 97*)

Two blues, characteristically varied by the insertion of contrasting passages; the last apparently a folk-tune, but the original is not available. *Snakey* is the work of a Hot Springs, Arkansas, Negro, an old-time blues pianist of parts; his manuscript, which is without an accented blue note (Handy's device, it should be remembered), is particularly valuable in throw-

ing light by characteristic chords, intervals, and grace notes on how the blues were played. And in the *Blues in Thirds*, note the flatting of the seventh and, when the bass drops to the subdominant B-flat, the similar treatment of *its* seventh above, now felt as such and not as the tonic third.

Rice Hotel
(*page 100*)

The Rice is one of the oldest of the skyscrapers that make up the central section of Houston, Texas, a pillar in the midst of limitless flatness. The tune that celebrated it in 1915 became widely known, and two years later was republished under another title, with lyrics added. Diligent inquiry at such sources as The Rice Hotel itself and the original publishers of the tune, Goggan & Bro., has failed to turn up any information about the songwriter, Jimmy Marten.

Beale Street
(*page 102*)

Beale "Street" is officially Beale Avenue, Memphis, although there is a perennial movement to make the name conform to song and story. There are at least two full books about Beale Street (listed at page 255), but the essence of the street is concentrated in the golden capsule of Handy's lyric, which, in turn, is set to a tune that runs the street's own gamut from joy to misery. On or near Beale Street today are Handy Park and the W. C. Handy Theater, but even now in Memphis a Negro may only be seen with whites, on stage or screen, in some menial character and a respectful attitude.

Tishomingo
(*page 106*)

The title is the name of a Mississippi Gulf Coast town and the song was among the national hits of 1917. The writer, Spencer Williams, is a mine of blues music, and is now back in New York after years in Paris, where as writer and accompanist he helped to launch Josephine Baker on her fabulous career.

Barnyard (Livery Stable)
(*page 109*)

To their surprise, but not their disappointment, the copyright owners of *Barnyard* learned in 1917 of its recording as *Livery Stable Blues* (Victor 18255) by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band. This one record, more than any other, told the nation about jazz itself. The song writers, like the band, were white, but what they were trying to tell about was what they had learned from the Negro musicians of New Orleans.

Hookin' Cow
(*page 113*)

By a Negro from Greenville, Mississippi, with "jazz" (including the bellows of a cow) and other embellishments by Handy, in the "Dixieland" tradition of *Livery Stable*, which was epidemic in 1917.

West Texas
(*page 116*)

The very crudity of this song, with its eleven-bar introduction, adds to its considerable charm for the writer, who recommends that it be played not only very slowly, but exactly as written. One seems to see in this music from Beale Street itself not West Texas but washed-out, gangling, white backwoodsmen, the food of hookworms, solemnly hitching about on a pine floor on the eve of some heresy trial. It was written by a Memphis Negro.

Lonesome Road
(*page 119*)

Two blues with an intermezzo by the writer of *Snakey*, and equally illuminating for the pianist, for whom Nash wrote (note his pedal-

ing in *Snakey Blues*), while Handy thought primarily of the singer or the orchestra.

Royal Garden
(*page 123*)

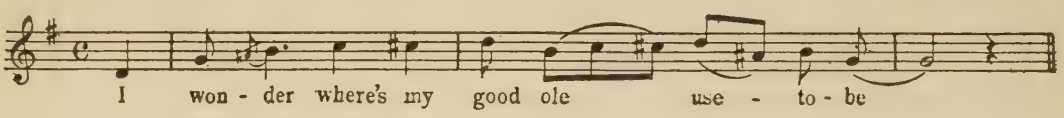
Named for an old Chicago amusement palace, this famous piece has been the subject of innumerable jazz recordings. It was written by Spencer Williams with another jazz giant, Clarence Williams (no relation).

Aunt Hagar's Children
(*page 127*)

In the Biblical title of these blues Handy is again announcing his race, to his race. The opening strain is his translation into notes and bars of the half-sung, half-spoken ejaculation of a woman whom he passed, years ago, as the wind whistled through the newly washed britches she was hanging up:

"*Your clo'es look lonesome, hangin' on th' line—*"

and then:



The whole was conceived and written by Handy on his knee, in exactly its present arrangement, in Brownlee's Barber Shop, Chicago, and tried out successfully that same night by Tate's Orchestra in the Vendome Theater. There is no purer melody among the blues than that of the final strain, and it should not be mistreated.

Loveless Love
(*page 129*)

This is the ancient *Careless Love* in a series of arrangements prefaced by an original Handy blues (not only one of his best, but unusual in the total absence of the "blue note"); the words are on a theme suggested to Handy by the discourse of a street-corner Jeremiah on 44th Street, New York; the concluding blues lines, however, may be compared with the folk-verse *Nora's Faithful Dove*, at page 10.

You'll Think of Me
(*page 133*)

By an old-timer of Negro song. Clark was cornettist of Mahara's Minstrels in 1897—during Handy's consulship—took his own minstrel show to Australia, managed the Dunbar Tennessee Ten (featuring Florence Mills before her night-club days), and was arranger for Pace & Handy in New York. He died several years ago. His lyrics have some salty racial turns.

Sundown
(*page 137*)

Here Handy dips into superstitions (for a thorough catalogue, see the Puckett book, listed at page 254). *Sundown* hardly needs a glossary, but as to the middle section: the wife of one of Handy's bandmen at Clarksdale, Mississippi, lost a ring. She suspected someone, had him watched, but learned nothing. So she told Handy she was "goin' to Newport to see Aunt Car'line Dye." Handy was confused and asked: "Do you think you can make it in time?" The point, however, was that Aunt Car'line had *second sight*. Her solution to the ring problem was: "The man you think, didn't do it, but don't worry. You'll find it soon, where you least expect."

Two weeks later, the musician's wife noticed a neighbor picking up a croquet ball in the yard and toying with it. On a hunch she took the first opportunity to capture the ball and break it open. Out fell the ring, and "Goin' to Newport (Arkansas), to see Aunt Car'line Dye"

became a Clarksdale by-word. Songs can start out on less than that.

Gulf Coast
(*page 141*)

This is another of Clarence Williams' celebrated blues. Williams was a music publisher successively in New Orleans, Chicago, and New York; knew everyone in jazz; played piano, sang, led orchestras; and even did piano-stool tricks, and composed the words and music of innumerable songs. The precision, combined with utter repose, of his playing (on such a record, for example, as his own *Organ Grinder Blues*), is little short of miraculous. His wife, Eva Taylor, is one of the very good blues singers.

Basement
(*page 144*)

Here at last is a blues on the note of "solid satisfaction" that I mentioned in the introductory text. Yet there is something underneath, such that its effect—as sung by Clara Smith on the ancient Columbia recording (14039 D)—was of utter desolation. Handy had written a song on order for Columbia, which wanted "something low-down." When a company executive complained that the piece wasn't low-down enough, Handy protested: "I don't know how I could get it low-downer, unless I wrote it in the basement." "That's it!" was the reply—and here it is.

Weeping Willow
(*page 149*)

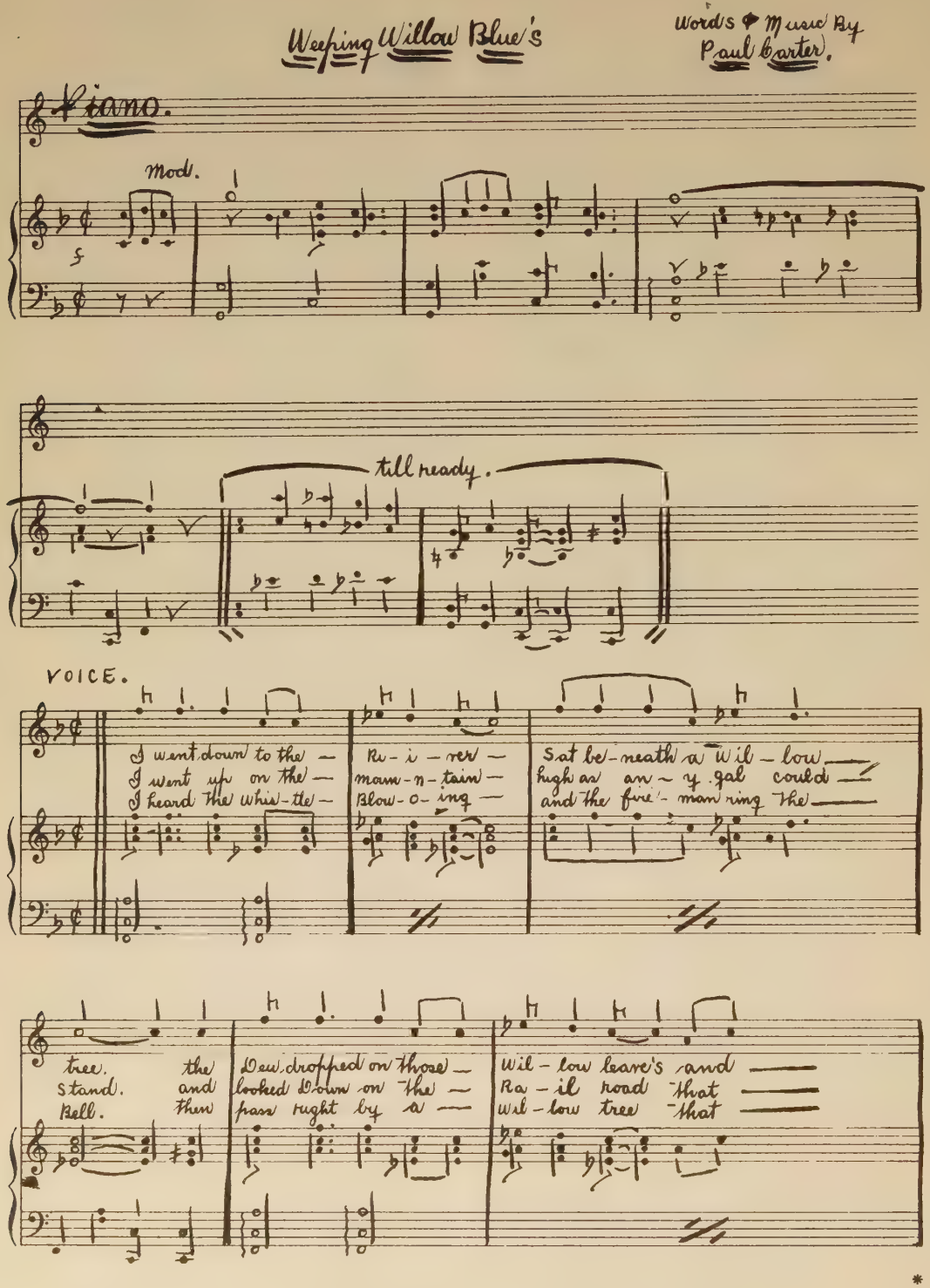
This song by another old-time Negro blues man had had such a delightful recording by Bessie Smith in 1924 that it seemed quite necessary to locate the owner and include it in the present edition of this collection. It had never been published, and on comparing the original manuscript with Bessie's record, it became evident that, starting out with a good tune and idea, she and her accompanists had done a most extraordinary job of interpretation and embellishment in the best New Orleans jazz vein.

The problem was to present it in a form that would at least suggest what Bessie Smith, with Fletcher Henderson (piano), Joe Smith (trumpet), and Charlie "Big" Green (trombone) had made of it. In short, to indicate what a completely expert small group of Negro musicians and a supreme blues singer are likely to do when confronted with a simple but worthwhile tune.

To transcribe for voice and piano, with even reasonable fidelity, an old, not too distinct recording of a complex performance was a major operation, in which I was glad to have expert assistance from Steve Stevens of the Handy staff. The result, had it been perfect, of course would still not convey the full effect of the actual brass, piano, and human voice, whose different timbres can—through their very differences—follow interwoven paths which would invite painful collisions on the keyboard of a solo piano. Some of these collisions have been avoided by compromise; others are left to the reader's agility. The instrumental lead, in general, is the trumpet's; the trombone coming in with occasional baleful growls, and the piano in its typical, subordinate New Orleans role, following lazily along with this finger and that—but in this record the timing, the touch, and the feeling, in every instance, were about perfect. (Not that the accompaniment is *emotional*—the poor girl's tale of woe is, to these musicians, no more than a pleasant path along which to trifle, observing meanwhile the flowers and the birds.) Keep in mind that the trio played slowly, quietly, in exquisite time and, in the "riff" accompaniment to the patter, with the spring and light-footedness of a cat on hot rocks.

A word about Bessie (the "Smith" is unnecessary in the blues world). She was a big, fat, pretty, black woman. Her voice was a 'cello, a trombone or a sword; it encompassed good and evil. Yet anyone who has seen her two-reel 1929 RKO sound-movie *St. Louis Blues* (never generally released and now unbelievably dated) knows that from her soul there radiated all the emanations of innocence, trust and pure joy. For a token of this, only see her photograph in the book *Jazzmen* (listed at page 255).

In this recording, without doubt, the entire introduction, accompaniment, and the two interludes were wholly *improvised*—as are some of the words and much of the vocal line. Accordingly, to afford the comparison which will show what these people were doing, here is a reproduction of the simple original manuscript from which they worked:


Weeping Willow Blue's
Words & Music By
Paul Barter.
Piano.
Mod.
till ready.
VOICE.
I went down to the — Ri - ver — Sat be - neath a Wil - low —
I went up on the — moun - tain — high as an - y gal could —
I heard the whis - tle — Blow - o - ing — and the fire - man ring the —
tree. the Dew dropped on those — Wil - low leave's and —
stand. and looked down on the — Ra - il road that —
Bell. then pass right by a — Wil - low tree that —

*

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Banjo
(*page 152*)

Mississippi Delta
(*page 155*)

Mountain Top
(*page 158*)

Rockpile
(*page 160*)

All the work of Spencer Williams. With some reminiscences of white man's music, the blues portions nevertheless stick faithfully to the classical form and show how much beauty may be packed into that narrow compass. Of particular interest to the writer was the contrast between the intricate bit of jazz in *Banjo* and the reminiscence of Sidney Homer in the "sleepy ending" immediately following it. There are a number of characteristic turns of thought, and the conceit of the sharks and the fishes is a favorite. It is sometimes interesting to run down a series of Negro songs for their interlocking ideas. Start with *Mountain Top* (second verse), then:

When I die, send me to my ma,
When I die, send me to my ma,
An' if my ma don't want me, send me to my pa.

If my pa don't want me, throw me in de sea,
If my pa don't want me, throw me in de sea,
Where de fishes an' de whales will make a fuss over me.

Next:

When I die, bury me deep
Put a napkin at my head an' feet
Grease my ears wid hog-eye lard—
An' throw me over in de white folks' yard.

This of course would lead directly into the college glee (I need not quote in full):

And when I die, don't bury me at all . . .

Or one could shoot off on the zoological angle from the "sharks, whales and fishes"—say, through Zora Hurston's extraordinary lyric in Clara Smith's phonograph record: *Jelly, Look What You Done Done:*

Went up on the mountain,
Looked down on the sea,
Saw a whale an' a tadpole,
Doin' the shivaree.

This could go on indefinitely.

Deep River
(*page 162*)

This excellent blues is the work of one of Handy's talented children, to words by the lyricist of *A Good Man Is Hard to Find.* It has a thought, about the Mississippi, in common with the *Dallas Blues* variant at page 13, and a particularly nice connecting passage ("If I had the means . . ."). It was a favorite of Willard Robison's Deep River Orchestra.

The Blues I've Got
(*page 165*)

Here also we have a mid-section specifically labeled "blues," and the last strain, although called "chant," is another one.

Handy is reminded, by one phrase of this song, of hearing a drunken woman, many years ago, sing out the one line:

"My man's got a heart like a rock cast in de sea!"

Asking the nearest colored onlooker what this might mean, he was promptly told: "Lord, it's *hard*—and gone so far she can't reach it."

Basin Street
(*page 168*)

Basin is as famous in New Orleans as Beale in Memphis; it was part of the segregated Storeyville district, whose closing in 1917 drove New Orleans jazz out into the open. Spencer Williams' song is the street's most famous musical memorial.

Beat Me, Daddy, Eight to the Bar
(*page 170*)

Here we find the whites, in 1940, getting onto the boogie bandwagon and, in the process, actually writing a twelve-bar blues. With so appealing and instructive a title and lyric and a fast, gay tune, this song not only did well for its owners, but also did much to step up the boogie boom (see page 31).

Boogie-Woogie on St. Louis Blues
(*page 173*)

One delightful feature of a good popular composer's existence is that at any moment some orchestra with talent at its command may produce some new conception of his past work that will enchant the public all over again. Hardly a jazz orchestra in the last thirty-five years has failed to try out its own twist on *St. Louis Blues*. The latest really radical treatment was in Tex Beneke's record, *St. Louis Blues March* (1948), the popularity of which, in turn, necessitated a sheet-music edition as well. No arrangement of *St. Louis*, however, has shown more creative imagination than the *Boogie* launched by Earl Hines' 1945 Bluebird record 10674-A and promptly republished by Handy in the transcription given here. Because of the importance of the *piano* in boogie, this piece could be more satisfyingly adapted to that instrument than *Weeping Willow* (page 149), and it affords another and especially fine example of the jazz treatment.

Earl Hines himself is one of the best Negro pianists and orchestra leaders. The opening atmosphere of the *Boogie* (leading into the tango strain of the original) is ominous and sinister, and one's anxiety is not lessened by the first of the spoken interjections that replace the lyric—"*Put out all the lights—call the law, right now!*" Thereupon, however, the "*I hate to see*" strain comes in to lighten things up a bit, and from there the players go into so free a fantasia on the final *St. Louis* strain that the preacher's "*Come a-long*" (page 242), and even the boogie bass, are entirely forgotten. The excitement mounts, through "*Play it till 1970*" (*St. Louis's* final copyright expiration year), through the "holler" that releases the terrific pressure at the last page, down to the reluctant closing after "Don't quit now!"—they had to quit because there wasn't any more record.

III. "*BLUES-SONGS*"

The rather awkward term in the above heading is the best I know of for pieces of all sorts, outside the classical form, but bearing some relation to the blues; and the term has been used thus in the music business.

Baby Seals
(*page 180*)

Baby F. Seals was a vaudeville singer of the team of Seals and Fisher, operating out of St. Louis on the T.O.B.A. Circuit. He visited Memphis more than once, and met Handy's band. His *Baby Seals Blues*, which he registered for copyright on August 7, 1912, after publication four days earlier, is so far as I know the first song, by one month and three days, ever published under the name "blues." * His original copyright application answered the question "Nationality of composer" with: "Afro-American." *The Memphis Blues* was not published till September 28th, and *Dallas Blues* appeared in Oklahoma City on September 6th. *Dallas*, obviously, belongs with the real blues; *Baby Seals*, though not in that category, has blues touches which its creator may, by 1912, have learned either from *Mister Crump* or from the folk-music.

Chinese
(*page 184*)

This engaging parody is one of the first and best by a white man, and had wide popularity in 1915.

* *The Richmond Blues* and other military marches of the nineteenth century were named for regiments, etc.

Ole Miss
(*page 187*)

"Ole Miss" was the fastest train out of Memphis, which accounts for Handy's selecting that title. Some people, misunderstanding Handy's title, have supposed that this piece was written, in a spirit of servile "Uncle Tom-ism," in honor of some white *grande dame*, so he would like it understood that this is not the case.

The final strain of *Ole Miss* was so commonly used by jazz musicians as a melody relief to Handy's *Bugle Rag* (also called "blues" and made up principally of bugle calls) that when any group of veteran players records *Bugle* from memory, *Ole Miss* invariably creeps in somewhere.

Homesickness
(*page 190*)

One of the first and most famous "white" blues, and showing in its words, its accidentals, and its breaks much of the blues influence. Like the other white composers, Hess rejects the twelve-bar limit.

Long Gone
(*page 193*)

Based on a folk-song more allied to the tragic ballads such as *Frankie and Johnny* than to the blues, and based on an actual event: a Negro trusty, Long John or Lost John, in the jail at Bowling Green, Kentucky, got wind of a project to try out the new bloodhounds on himself, giving him a start around the courthouse. He prepared himself accordingly by fixing a steel trap in a barrel laid on its side, over which he jumped as he started; the leadhound followed the scent into the barrel and the trap; the rest stopped to investigate; by the time the commotion subsided Long John was in the woods, and he never came back. This charming piece in the best, lazy, careless, soft-shoe tradition is the joint work of Handy and another of the real old-timers, Chris Smith, Negro, the writer of the words and music of *Ballin' the Jack*. That tune was neither a blues nor a "blues-song," but it stood out from the 1913 run of the mill as strangely and excitingly as Handy's own early tunes. Smith, too, now lives in New York.

Schoolhouse
(*page 196*)

Here Irving Berlin, writing in 1921, worked out his own meaning for the word "blues" without any Negroid devices. The melancholy of *Schoolhouse* is a tinge, a graceful pose, quite subordinate to its humor—yet, as has already been mentioned, Berlin when he chooses can speak the other language. I learned from Handy that of Berlin's innumerable songs, the one which most emphatically caught on with Negroes—for its words—was *Someone Else May Be There While I'm Gone*, which is not a blues, but which is most certainly a blues thought.

Harlem
(*page 199*)

Here the Father of the Blues celebrates New York's Negro city-within-a-city. An introductory strain of savage vigor is followed by a demure little exercise in modulations, passing finally into the charming old folk-tune, *I've Laid Around This Town Too Long*, which is quoted on page 16. (Handy followed up this thought, in the early '40s, by moving his home from Harlem to a New York suburb.)

This is one of Handy's most painstakingly worked-out popular songs, a piece of real melody and sound craftsmanship throughout.

John Henry
(*page 203*)

Midway between the work songs and the blues, and founded on a very famous ballad work song. Guy B. Johnson's book, *John Henry* (University of North Carolina, 1929), cites many versions of the songs about this folk-hero, including this one.

John Henry was the Paul Bunyan of the riveters of the Southeast, of superhuman power, skill, and speed. But when the steam riveter came in, according to different legends it

crushed him, or he busted himself trying to outdo it, or, having failed, he silently faded away into history. Handy first heard the work song at Muscle Shoals, but believes that John Henry himself labored in West Virginia. Play the chorus and "Moral" with *Joe Jacobs* (page 42) in mind.

Atlanta
(*page 207*)

Handy didn't look around for places to name songs after—he had a special reason for dedicating this effort to Atlanta. In 1916 the Handy Band ventured a concert there, in the great auditorium where the Metropolitan Opera Company plays its spring engagements, bringing Armand J. Piron and Clarence Williams from New Orleans as assisting artists and giving Handy's daughter Katharine, then twelve, her debut as a singer. They drew crowds totaling seven thousand, made the front pages, and stayed a week.

The *Atlanta Blues* music is based on two folk-tunes. The first strain went with:

Me 'n' my baby got six long months to do de grind.

The second was widely known and has been wrongly called a "blues":

Make me a pallet on de flo',
Make it where yo' man won't never know.

Chicago Gouge
(*page 210*)

Handy's experiment in a slowed-up Charleston rhythm, in memory of a trip to Chicago in 1924. A few terms used need explanation: stomps and struggles are home dancing parties; chittlin's are, shall we say, pigs' giblets, and are passed around at chittlin' juggles. A house-rent stomp is one given for an entrance-fee, used for the purpose indicated. The chittlin's explain the conduct of the hungry man in *Chicago Gouge*, while the chorus explains the word "Gouge" itself.

Half of It, Dearie
(*page 213*)

This song, with Ann Ronell's *Willow, Weep for Me* (p. 220), exemplifies sophisticated play upon the blues, by whites. It contains three elaborate and eccentric jazz breaks which were written in by George Gershwin especially for the original edition of this book, and which have never appeared elsewhere. The lyric, by his accomplished brother Ira, is in keeping, as was always the case with the songs of this brilliant and irreplaceable team.

Chantez-les Bas
(*page 216*)

This title is in the Arcadian French *patois* with which a soft-voiced neighbor asked some of Handy's men to please pipe down while they were serenading a gal in a Louisiana town. Handy liked the *patois*, and here, long after (as is the way with what Handy likes), it came out in song.

Willow, Weep for Me
(*page 220*)

This song by the white writer Ann Ronell exemplifies the way in which blues devices—particularly the angular lines and eccentric rhythm changes appropriate to the instrumental breaks—can be adapted to the most fastidiously sophisticated song writing. This, however, is a piece to be treasured for its own personality, independent of genealogy or analysis.

Hong Kong
(*page 224*)

I have mentioned the gifted Hoagy Carmichael on page 30. He not only wrote *Hong Kong*, words and music, but personally played and sang it in the movie *To Have and Have Not*, thus ingratiating himself to a large cross-section of the public. His piano work has the

pure, brittle touch of the best jazz players. His singing intonations go clear back to the *Yankee Doodle* tradition (Sigmund Spaeth quotes the Skillern edition, London, circa 1780: "The Words to Be Sung Thru' the Nose, & in the West Country Drawl & Dialect"). *Hong Kong* is of course not a classical blues, but a delightful burlesque; nevertheless it has certain points of resemblance to *St. James Infirmary*.

"Kicked old Buddha's gong" is ambiguous. On the surface it seems merely Oriental sacrilege; however, Prof. Cab Calloway's *Minnie the Moocher* teaches us that "kickin' the gong around" is smoking hop.

IV. *LARGER FORMS*

Only failure to reach James P. Johnson's publisher in time before going to press has prevented the inclusion of any of that great Negro jazz pianist's work in this book. Particularly regrettable is the absence of an excerpt from his long and fascinating mélange known as *Yamecraw*. (Other long works with blues influence have been mentioned in the introductory text.)

Krazy Kat (Katnip Blues)
(page 230)

Already a generation is growing up that does not know the ever-loving Krazy Kat, the hero or heroine (he or she, himself or herself, did not know which) of the late George Herriman's comic strip, and the inspiration for this musical frolic of John Alden Carpenter. The music for this pantomime has recently been republished after twenty-seven years, in a thorough-going revision but still with the Herriman pictures. This excerpt from the original version portrays the effects of the Katnip bouquet handed to Krazy by the disguised betrayer Ignatz the Mouse, who, behind his back, in his other hand, conceals a brick.

Rhapsody in Blue
(page 233)

Concerto in F
(page 234)

Twelve years after his death, George Gershwin's place in the hearts of the American public is even more firmly established than at the height of his career. The richness of his fund of melody was always apparent, but time has been showing that his work wears well, and that the grace of his matter and the felicity of his treatment, which so well signify his native joy of life, can be as important to multitudes as the reflection of other masters, whether or not more profound.

One valid objection to the idea that jazz is timber for serious writing is that wrapped up in the conception of jazz itself is that of rhythm, especially of an unvarying rapid tom-tom beat which, after a time, must become intolerably monotonous. It is a question, therefore, whether this relentless pulse can be sacrificed, and something still be left which will carry the original flavor. The excerpts given here from Gershwin's *Rhapsody* and his *Concerto* seem to call for an affirmative answer; the descending portion with which the former begins, the part for the right hand in the latter (speeded up, it might be called a succession of what are known as "hot choruses"), both dispense with dance tempo and yet remain jazz, of the musical type. The New Orleans touch appears in the timbres of the instruments for which the music is scored, as in that of the *Concerto*'s derby-hatted trumpets, and the angry clarinet without which the felonious opening yell of the *Rhapsody* would be a milder thing.

By pointing out, then, that jazz is a thing principally of characteristic melodic figures and of tone-color, Gershwin here demonstrates its availability as auxiliary material for long compositions. Its general value for such use need not be examined here, since he shows at the same time that he, at least, can employ it with diverse and striking implications. And as theirs is the prevailing color in all jazz save that of the drums, we find in this music the blues exerting, in a new field, an influence of undiminished vitality and suggestiveness. A. N.

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